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THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

The principal aim and object of this Society is to form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour. The subsidiary objects are: The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences, and the demonstration of the importance of such study; and the investigation of the unexplained laws of nature and the psychical powers latent in man.

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EDITORS, THE THEOSOPHICAL QUARTERLY.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

JULY, 1933

The Theosophical Society, as such, is not responsible for any opinion or declaration in this magazine, by whomsoever expressed, unless contained in an official document.

The Institution of the Family

THE Platonists conceived of the Universe as a living creature. Indeed, the term, "organism", may be applied to anything, from a galaxy to a quantum, which is, in some degree, a self-contained unit, distinguishable from other similar units and from the mass of undifferentiated substance. Mankind in its totality is such an organism, within which is "telescoped" a series of lesser organisms,—races, nations, classes, social groups, families, individuals, the last-named being, in a certain sense, the "ultimate atoms" in this great body of humanity.

Every organism is the sum-total of the entities which compose it, but it is also something more. It is not easy to define what that "something more" is. Yet we know that racial, national and family types are real. A Frenchman differs from a German, not only because he is another person, but because his consciousness contains a fragment of the national consciousness of France. It is true that every personality is an entity, but it is also true that it serves as a vehicle and expression of larger entities—the race, the nation, the family—into which it is born. Anyone who has ever been in a crowd, must be aware of what is meant by a collective consciousness, which is both an aggregate of the elements that constitute it and a distinct thing having its own identity.

Of course, the entities which contain the individual have not all reached the same grade of evolution. In so far as the human species, conceived as a whole, is organic, it would seem to be in a very primitive stage, corresponding, perhaps, to that of sponges and jelly-fish. The races and other subdivisions of humanity vary widely in the degree to which their qualities become self-conscious in the individual. Of them all, the family has, doubtless, progressed the farthest along its particular line of evolution. The family is the natural matrix within which the individual normally first comes to consciousness of himself. The qualities which the child sees mirrored in his mind are those of the entity by which he is enclosed.

The family is, therefore, not a man-made institution which people can discard at will. It is an institution of Nature itself, and its rôle is indispensable. Not only does it protect and train the individual, fitting him for the battle of life which afterwards he must often wage single-handed; it is the potential vehicle of the larger entity, the clan or the nation, by which it is itself surrounded. The qualities of a real social or national life, that is, of a real civilization, normally rise to incipient self-consciousness in the child, in so far as his family is an integral part of that civilization.

There are exceptions to this general rule, for individuals have their own Karma and free-will, and are in different phases of development. But it is none the less veritable, that an attack upon the family is an attack upon all that we mean by civilization, as the leaders of Soviet Russia well understand. It is also an attack upon Nature. It cannot be repeated too often: so long as human beings are born in the present way, the family is a natural unit of life. This is so true that the utmost that can be done for an orphan, is to surround him with an atmosphere which imitates as nearly as possible that of the home of which he has been deprived. It should be added that by home, we mean something rather old-fashioned, a large family where the younger children are brought up not only by their parents but by their older brothers and sisters. One is inclined to believe that Nature is not averse to large families; that the danger of spoiling a child is lessened in proportion to the number of his brothers and sisters.

It should be made clear, that no civilization can endure if the institution of the family be undermined. The whole of human history testifies to this, and the responsibility for ignoring it rests upon older people, upon parents and teachers, of course, but also upon all who claim to believe in civilized standards. One of the first duties of everyone who has reached years of discretion is to learn to think lucidly and to speak prudently.

Few would deny that something is the matter with the modern family and with modern education. But it would seem that the worst danger of the present situation is the tendency to find some cure that is worse than the disease. The only obvious cure is a "Return to Nature", not in the Rousseauist but in the Confucian sense. Such a "Return to Nature" implies nothing less than a restoration of the family to its true function as the matrix in which individual virtues take shape. This is not a reactionary proposal. In our opinion, it is plain common-sense. One need only reflect upon the events which have followed the disintegration of family life in contemporary China. Unless the Western nations can save their own family life from similar destruction, sooner or later their civilization, like that of China, will degenerate into social and political chaos.

Old and Young China

Probably no race ever solved the problem of self-preservation as successfully as the Chinese. For at least three thousand years China assimilated each new generation with very little friction, almost without episode. Traditions and institutions which long antedated Confucius remained unchanged, century

after century, because the few who rebelled against them, like the Emperor Che-Houang ti, were unable to produce more than an occasional ripple on the surface of the even-flowing current of the racial consciousness. It has been said, with some appearance of justice, that the Chinese conformed too perfectly to the standards of their past; that they had become self-satisfied, static, incapable of new adaptations. Probably this was the argument of Che-Houang ti, when he undertook to burn the Confucian scriptures and thus to eradicate the memory of the past from the minds of his subjects. However, those who revere the accomplishments of Chinese civilization, must admit that these were made possible by the solidity of its foundations, which remained unshaken through flood and famine and invasion and dynastic change.

The foundations were not built by the Sages, as they themselves testified, but by Nature. The teaching of the great reformers of ancient China is a model of what the activity of the human reason, applied to social problems, ought to be. They meditated upon "the things which are", not upon some fancied Utopia, basing their reforms upon their discernment of the normal organic structure of human society, not opposing what they divined to be the purpose of Nature, but seeking the way of co-operation with it. Thus it was the achievement of Confucius clearly to recognize that family duty is the cornerstone of every enduring ethical system, and that the first objective of the moral philosopher must be to assist Nature in strengthening the ties of family life.

The Confucian ethical system survived every storm until the overthrow of the Manchu Dynasty. The leaders of the revolution which gave birth to Young China were most unfortunately captivated by the ideology of Western democracy. They brought to China "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness", and the effect of this Jeffersonian jargon upon the younger generation of China has been so devastating, that for the first time the heart of its whole social constitution is threatened with death.

There are many obvious symptoms of the disease which is consuming the ancient commonwealth. Perhaps, the most ominous of all are the student strikes, for these are conducted with a disrespect for older scholars which would have been inconceivable under the old regime. An able observer, J. O. P. Bland, comments as follows:

> Student movements have been recorded in Chinese history as far back as the Han period, but the indiscipline and violence which have marked those of recent years are entirely new features. They are only to be explained by the fact that, whereas patience, perseverance and respect for authority were essential virtues, imposed upon scholars by the Confucian system, the new dispensation having abolished these, has left the younger generation without steadying force or moral guidance. The fundamental weakness of the present system—or lack of it—resulting from the substitution of Western learning for the Canons of the Sages is, that the average modern student in China (as in India) cannot bring his education into any direct relation with the life of his own people. As Prince Ito said of them in 1909, their intentions may be excellent, "but

> they have hardly any roots in the country and, therefore, as a class cannot be expected to direct and control any practical course of action" (*China: The Pity of It*, p. 125).

The Problem of Youth in Germany

It is a far journey from China to Germany, as far as from the oldest extant civilization—or what is left of it—to the thing called "Kultur". It is interesting, however, to note that "Kultur" is the product of causes almost diametrically opposite in nature to those which operated so consistently in China before the Twentieth Century. Some rather obvious reflections are suggested by an article in the *Mercure de France*, March 1, 1933, on "The Problem of Youth in Germany" (*Le Problème de la Jeunesse en Allemagne*) by Jean-Édouard Spenlé. The following indicates its general theme:

> Germany hails itself as the country of youth. . . . We know the monument which the author of *Siegfried* raised to the "young German", evoking the radiant features of the son of the Forest, the hero with the intrepid laughter who forges his own sword, with which, without fear or remorse, he breaks the spear of the old god, the guardian of worn-out treaties and antiquated contracts. . . . More than anywhere else, Germany is the field of conflict between the generations, between old and young. This crisis, at once biological, sentimental and moral, seems to revolutionize the interior being, on the threshold of youth, and it manifests itself collectively whenever a new generation makes its more or less noisy entrance on the stage. It can give birth to a program, to a party, or, at the very least, . . . to a "pose". . . . We may find analogous examples of this in France. But with us this revolution of youth scarcely passes beyond the bright summits of literature. It does not call in question the very foundations of moral, religious and national life. That which characterizes the youth movement in Germany is the fact that it is more difficult there to incorporate a new generation into the "continuity" which represents the history of a people. A more violent antagonism is aroused between the opinion which this generation has of itself and the world in which it is called upon to integrate itself. And this problem does not date from yesterday. It is endemic, chronic. In its variable forms, it reproduces almost always the same symptoms.

The recurrence of this *Jugendbewegung* or "youth-movement", whenever a generation approaches manhood, explains many of the peculiarities of German history. It suggests one reason why Germany is, in a real sense, scarcely more civilized to-day than she was in the time of the Romans,—for with individual exceptions, the Germans have failed to assimilate the essence of the Latin culture with which they have been in contact since the conquests of Charlemagne. How can any country develop a civilization, if such institutions as it may occasionally begin to form, are always threatened with violent overthrow by its young men? Before any traditions of spiritual value can become rooted in a soil, they must be guarded with devotion by a series of generations. They do not flourish amid periodical psychic convulsions.

Germany is rightly called the "country of youth", though not in the sense imagined by the Germans. Many typical German traits recall the characteristics of a young bully,—his self-assertiveness, his fear of the strong and contempt for the weak, his cruelty and addiction to torture, his fits of sentimentality, his predilection for lying, and so on. When the bully has intelligence and physical strength, he may become a dangerous criminal. When a racial or political entity is dominated by the spirit of rebellious youth, it is natural that it should assume one or another of the "forms" which have incarnated the German spirit at various times. Germany has alternated between the extremes of chaos and materialistic efficiency, between "romantic" anarchy and militarism, without ever becoming an organic entity of the same order of development as England and France.

Immature Minds in Mature Bodies

The world renews its youth with every generation. Ideally this re-invigoration should be the product of a conjunction between the wisdom of experience and the spontaneous energy of youth. When such a conjunction occurs, under exceptionally favourable conditions, in a civilization, the line of evolution hitherto traced by that civilization is extended and deepened. The historical periods in which genius has most flourished, have been those in which there has been the most concordant blending of maturity of mind, with the forceful enthusiasm that is generally manifested in human nature only during the years of youth. Perhaps genius is more than usually rare to-day, because judgment and fervour are so rarely united in the same person.

One of the most unfortunate things that can happen to a man, as he grows older, is to become merely a wise and disinterested spectator of human follies, to play the rôle of a gentle but thoroughly disillusioned cynic. But the average man would seem to be unfortunate in an altogether different sense, inasmuch as his mind does not mature with his body. Though he live to be a hundred, his intelligence is no riper than when he was twenty. That is to say, he carries with him to the grave an unreal picture of the world and of his place in it. This mental image is shaped and coloured by his hopes and fears, his desires and aversions, his vanities and resentments. When he does come into direct touch with some reality, he tries as hard as he can to warp it into a form that is agreeable to him. This is a natural or, at least, an habitual state of consciousness in the child. It is always pitiable in the grown man and, in certain instances, it may become tragic.

There have always been immature minds in mature bodies, even during the most brilliant epochs. As long as the institutions of a society hold firm, such a condition presents no particular danger, for the mind which never grows up is not necessarily rebellious. Danger develops when these institutions, for one reason or another, are weakened, and the immature mind is cut adrift from its moorings. It then becomes peculiarly sensitive to any suggestion which flatters its sense of importance or seems to broaden its opportunities for self-indulgence.

This appears to be the secret of the appeal which radicalism makes to-day to so many people whose minds have not grown up. They have been detached from their natural allegiance to law and order, and have become a prey to the first subversive ideas which enter their heads. That is why the most explosive elements in modern society are not the professional agitators and the mobs of vicious and elemental creatures who follow them. Under normal conditions, these can be controlled, together with other criminals, by the police. The real peril comes from the activity of the so-called *intelligentsia*, the "intellectuals", whose self-appointed work is the dissemination of subversive ideas. It can be justly affirmed that the "intellectuals" have inaugurated every major revolutionary movement in recent history. Their method has always been essentially the same,—first, to spread doubts as to the validity of the traditional institutions of civilization; and then, to propose, in the place of the "natural state" which is to be destroyed, the establishment of an "artificial state" planned by what they are pleased to call pure reason. We shall have occasion to enquire just what they mean by pure reason. Meanwhile, we wish to stress the point that these thoughts, acting upon immature minds, convert thousands of quite colourless people more or less rapidly into socialists and communists and "reds" of every hue. Moreover, other thousands who are not fully converted, lose faith in civilized standards, and, when the test comes, defend them spinelessly, if at all.

A French writer describing the recent Spanish Revolution says that at first it seemed to be impossible to stir the populace of Madrid to commit any overt act against the monarchy. Then there suddenly arrived upon the scene Miguel de Unamuno, the poet and philosopher, a man of remarkable mental force, who had for years been the leader of the intellectual opposition to Alfonso XIII. "The appearance of Unamuno was sufficient to turn the head of Madrid, to start a rain of tiles from the roofs upon the police, to set off fire-arms, to scatter wounded in the streets" (André Germain: *La Révolution Espagnole*, p. 118).

Mathematics Misapplied

In some instances, "intellectuals" may be conscious agents of the Dark Powers, co-operating with them towards a universal corruption of human nature. But the vast majority of them seem to be quite irresponsible. They are, for the most part, professors and men of letters, and suffer from the lack of certain kinds of practical experience. This may account for the over-development of what might be described as the purely "logical" faculty of their minds at the expense of the other equally important mental powers. We are speaking, of course, of the more capable of them; the lesser lights of the *intelligentsia* are incapable even of being logical.

The commonest error of the "intellectual" is his application of pure reason to social problems, a mode of thinking which is legitimate only in pure logic or pure mathematics. In pure logic, the objective truth of the premises adopted is irrelevant, for the object of the logician is to illustrate how correct conclusions can be drawn from any given premises. When the "intellectual" chooses a set

of axioms or definitions as the starting point of his thesis, he does not base them upon his observation of Nature, but upon his personal preconceptions as to what they ought to mean.

The Spanish philosopher, Ortega y Gasset, describes very clearly in his latest book the nature of this type of reasoning and its relation to revolutionary propaganda:

> New qualities, of an intellectual category, make an ardent and exclusive appeal to the human spirit. The result is a strange disdain for realities; men turn their backs to the latter and become the impassioned slaves of ideas as such. The perfection of the geometrical form of the idea intoxicates its devotees to the point of forgetting that, by definition, the business of the idea is to coincide with the reality of which it is an expression in the medium of thought. The next step is the total inversion of spontaneous perspective. Ideas have so far been employed simply as instruments in the service of vital necessities. But now life is to take up the service of ideas. This radical reshuffling of the relations between life and idea is the essence of the revolutionary spirit (*The Modern Theme*, pp. 112-113).

After all, the mind of the average "intellectual", in spite of its occasional superficial brilliance, is as childlike as are the less specialized minds which he corrupts. He plays with his logical faculty, as he played with toy engines when he was a little boy and was still quite harmless.

The Encyclopædists and the French Revolution

The modern *intelligentsia* has had its prototypes in every century, and their appearance on the public stage, like that of Unamuno, has often preceded an outbreak of the mob. There were the Sophists of Greece, for instance, whose meretricious reasoning was exposed by Socrates and Plato; and even in ancient China there were "philosophers" who expounded subversive ideas with the volubility of sophomores. But the clearest example of the revolutionary effect of reckless thinking is given by the great French Revolution. It is not strange that subsequent revolutionary propagandists have deliberately tried to reproduce the state of mental discontent which was certainly one of the major causes of that Revolution.

Some historians have exaggerated the importance of what may be called the secondary causes of the Revolution. Then, as now, there were social and political abuses,—defects of administration, an inequitable system of taxation, legal anachronisms, etc. But these abuses could have been cured without a national catastrophe. Both Louis XV and Louis XVI made one effort after another to reform the government entrusted to them, and their failure was due, in no small measure, to the refusal of their subjects to co-operate whole-heartedly with them. Their subjects were, indeed, so befuddled by the Utopian notions prevalent everywhere, that they had no faith in practical measures to ameliorate conditions. Louis XVI finally became as befuddled as the rest, and, doubting his own right to govern, surrendered his authority to the Utopians, who were,

in turn, allowed to hold the outer emblems of power for a while, until they were removed by the professional trouble-makers—Marat, Danton, Robespierre, and the other Terrorists. France has not yet fully emerged from the crisis which these events precipitated.

They might never have happened, if it had not been for the Utopians, the famous group of the *philosophes*, whose work was centred in the preparation of the *Encyclopédie*. This massive work, directed by Diderot and d'Alembert, was ostensibly a catalogue of the scientific knowledge of the time. Its real function was to provide a vehicle for the expression of the social and political views of its contributors, among whom was included at least one man with extraordinary talents, Voltaire. But never have great abilities been used so consistently for purposes almost wholly destructive. The *Encyclopédie* became in their hands a *machine de guerre* directed against all the institutions which had become identified with the slow development of civilization during thousands of years.

Pierre Gaxotte concisely states both their objective and their method:

> In reality, the *philosophes* confidently exploited the scientific attainments of their time without really understanding them, because they could draw from science arguments against tradition, Catholicism, history and authority; but they gave their real, sustained attention only to the most abstract sciences: pure mathematics and celestial mechanics.
>
> They transported the method of deduction of these sciences to the political and social domain where it was the less applicable, in that they attached it to the postulate of the natural goodness of man, which there is no reason to believe.
>
> From 1751 to 1772, the *Encyclopédie* united against the common enemy all these ideas and all these aspirations: criticism of the monarchy and of its intellectual foundations, atheism, sensualism, the praise of the Eighteenth Century regarded as the century of light and progress, economic liberalism, disparagement of civilization, the vindication of a pretended state of nature wherein all men would be equal as regards both rights and property, and finally, a very detailed and full study of machines and trades. . . .
>
> Their purpose was to destroy, and to keep from being reborn, all the natural organisms which, until their time, had contained the individual, and which were thereafter to be considered oppressive and immoral. Property, the family, the corporation, the town, the province, the nation, the Church were so many obstacles to be overthrown. One will object that the majority of the citizens respect them, are satisfied, find in them both happiness and peace of soul; there is no liberty against Liberty (*La Révolution Française*, pp. 59-62).

With very few changes, this description might be applied to the *philosophes* of the Twentieth Century, to Bernard Shaw, H. G. Wells, Bertrand Russell, John Dewey, Stuart Chase, and the whole company. Even "technocracy" seems to have been a reincarnation of one of the fads of the Encyclopædists. It will not be the fault of our "intellectuals" if their efforts do not culminate in a crisis at least as terrible as the French Revolution.

The Need For Understanding

We suggested that the resuscitation of the family must be achieved, or the civilization which we have inherited will follow its predecessors into oblivion. The family is the natural link between the individual and the racial or national consciousness. But we shall not succeed in materially strengthening that link by working ourselves up into some sentimental mood of short duration. The enemies of civilization are not checked in their progress by Mother's Day,—which in any case comes but once a year.

It would seem that those who still believe in civilization must seriously set to work to straighten their thinking processes and to keep them straight. Only as they understand the nature of the family bond, will they be able to protect their minds from the fallacies which threaten it; and unless they be sure in their own judgments, they will never be able to make others understand.

It is said in the *Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad*, that as the Gods bring each power into manifestation, the Demons pierce it with evil. The power of thought is, in essence, divine. It is our duty to guard it from the Demons. We can do this, if we resolve to develop in ourselves the latent faculty of judgment, if we decide finally to become mature in a mental as well as in a physical sense.

Where there is no vision, the people perish.—Proverbs xxix, 18.

O thou that . . . criest bitterly to the gods for a kingdom wherein to rule and create, know this of a truth: the thing thou seekest is already with thee, "here or nowhere," couldst thou only see.—Carlyle.

WILLIAM BECKFORD

THE ENGLISH SHABERON?

ON June 20th, 1882, Madame Blavatsky wrote a letter from Baroda to A. P. Sinnett which contains one paragraph alluding to an English Adept that must have intrigued countless students of Theosophy. She is replying to a letter from Sinnett, and is commenting on it, phrase by phrase, as was often her wont. Since the paragraph is quite long, the pertinent parts only will be quoted here, retaining enough of the setting to give point to the special passage under immediate consideration. Sinnett had, apparently, written disparagingly of "all this testing and probation business" as "so repulsive to straight-forward European natures". H.P.B. replied to the effect that Sinnett, along with everyone else, Hindu or European, had to accept the Masters' terms: "You have either to accept them *as they are* or else—leave them." After pointing out that Master K. H. was on probation himself—"only a far higher and more difficult one", she added the following most suggestive sentences, which are reproduced from the printed page so as to present the Adept's own glyph signature, which presumably he affixed to the original letter while H.P.B. was writing.[1]

> **The CHIEFS do not make any difference during the first years between " Englishmen of the better sort " and any other Englishman or native. In fact, their hearts are rather for the natives. They fear and mistrust (as a nation) the English nation, and in their eyes a Russian, a Frenchman, an Englishman or any other son of Christendom and civilisation is an object to be hardly, if ever trusted. And do you know who it is, who at the present moment is set the *deadliest* against you English theosophists among the *Shaberons* ? An Englishman, my dear Boss, a countryman of yours, a victim of your British laws and Mrs. Grundy ; one who was once upon a time some forty years ago, a highly educated Squire, rich, and a Chief Justice in his county, a Greek and Latin scholar. So much—** **permits me to say to you, and he is at my elbow—and who now is the deadliest enemy of civilisation and Christo-*star* as he calls Europe. It is *he* and not the Tibetan or Hindu born Shaberons who mistrusts the rulers of the " Eclectic T.S." and that's all I am allowed to tell you.**

Who was this English *Shaberon*,—or Adept, to give an English equivalent of the Tibetan term?

One of our older students suggested to the present writer that the outer life of William Beckford corresponds with the statements by H.P.B. in regard to

[1] *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky to A. P. Sinnett*, London, 1925, p. 20.

this English *Shaberon*, and that the hypothesis would be well worthy of careful exploration. Acting on this hint, therefore, investigation has proved highly interesting and suggestive, until the writer must confess that he finds the evidence well-nigh conclusive. Nevertheless, hypothesis, no matter how well substantiated in appearance, and absolute truth, are not necessarily equivalent; and the present article can, and does, make no claim whatever to authority. However, the available evidence can always speak for itself.

William Beckford is well known to students of English literature as the "eccentric" author of an oriental tale, *Vathek*, of great imaginative power and striking genius, which, because it was composed and published in French, as well as translated later into English, has the added distinction of being one of the very few French books, accepted as a classic in that country, which was written by an Englishman. Beckford was born in 1760 at Fonthill, Wiltshire, fourteen miles from Stonehenge, and died in Bath in 1844. Recently—and perhaps this fact is not without its significance—his life and writings have attracted the renewed interest of literary men, and a series of articles and three biographies have appeared—the latest within a few months, correcting many earlier legends and errors. These are, almost of necessity, unsatisfactory to the student of Theosophy, not because their respective authors were lacking in industry or ability, but because of what has been, perhaps inevitably, left out of account. The existing material for a biography of Beckford is enormous. He kept almost all of his voluminous correspondence, together with notes, and a disjointed diary. Much of his published work—books of travel—is autobiographical; and late in life he actually made transcripts of earlier letters—both his own and those of his correspondents, annotating and elucidating them, adding additional facts, and docketing them carefully for the use of future generations. Besides this, there are numerous accounts in the newspapers of his exploits, and contemporary literature is full of scattered references to him, from Byron's famous verse in *Childe Harold*, to Roger's *Table Talk*, and Walpole's, Chatham's, and Beaconsfield's *Letters*, and so forth. Selection, therefore, was, and remains, imperative; but just for this reason one cannot tell what lies as yet hidden in numerous unpublished letters. The interests of Beckford's biographers have unfortunately been directed far more to what would make "good copy" and entertain worldly readers, than towards the discovery of Beckford's true genius, or of the deeper motives that lay behind the many curious phases of his life. One and all unite in calling him an "eccentric" (his latest biographer speaks of "his freakish mind"), but no two agree as to the source of his eccentricity. Nevertheless, they cannot avoid the realization that his so-called peculiarities sprang, not from lack of self-control or mental unbalance, but from a chosen course of action, deliberately planned and systematically carried out. The more this eccentricity is examined, the less eccentric it appears, viewed in almost any light except that of a fox-hunting English squire, or of a worldly-minded, if "high-brow" academian.

Because the material is so abundant, only an outline of his life, with certain of its outstanding characteristics, can be attempted in a preliminary article.

Before, however, undertaking to reinterpret the facts and perhaps discover in them something at least of what lies below the surface, it would be well to have in mind certain things which have been told us about the presence and work of members of the Lodge in the world. In one of the very first letters written by the Master K. H. to Sinnett in 1880, there occur these well known sentences about the members of the Fraternity: "How do you know they have made no such mark? Are you acquainted with their efforts, successes, and failures? Have you any dock upon which to arraign them? *How could your world collect proofs* of the doings of men who have *sedulously kept closed every possible door of approach* by which the inquisitive could spy upon them? The prime condition of their success was that they should never be supervised or obstructed." Madame Blavatsky's phrases about this English *Shaberon* indicate clearly that, though misunderstood, he took his place among his fellow Englishmen as a highly educated squire, as rich, as a Justice of the Peace in his County, and as a Greek and Latin scholar—and yet he was *never* recognized by them for what he was, his name was outstanding neither as a dabbler in occultism, nor as a religious mystic; and therefore he succeeded perfectly in veiling his true individuality behind the personal mask, played his part without a slip, and was neither "supervised nor obstructed" in carrying forward the inner work for the accomplishment of which he undoubtedly undertook the dangers of incarnation.

Once given the clue to such a life, the study of the real Beckford's own early struggles to master a new personality, or instrument, and the method of his contacts with people and the world around him, become subjects of fascinating and highly instructive study. Mr. Judge once wrote: "And among this 'sacred tribe of heroes' must be classed other souls. They are those who, although now inhabiting bodies and moving among men, have passed through many occult initiations in previous lives, but are now condemned, as it were, to the penance of living in circumstances and in bodies that hem them in, as well as for a time make them forget the glorious past. But their influence is felt, even if they themselves are not aware of it. For their higher nature being in fact more developed than that of other men, it influences other natures at night or in hours of the day when all is favourable. The fact that these *obscured adepts* are not aware now of what they really are, only has to do with their memory of the past; it does not follow, because a man cannot remember his initiations, that he has had none. . . . These souls were as witnesses to the truth, leaving through the centuries, in their own nations, evidences for those who followed, and suggestions for keeping spirituality bright,—seed-thoughts, as it were, ready for the new mental soil. And as well as these historical characters, there are countless numbers of men and women now living who have passed through certain initiations during their past lives upon earth, and who produce effects in many directions quite unknown to themselves. They are, in fact, old friends of 'the sacred tribe of heroes', and can therefore be more easily used for the spreading of influences and the carrying out of effects necessary for the preservation of spirituality in this age of darkness."[2]

[2] *The Path*, "Cycles", Vol. IV, Dec., 1889, p. 278.

There is much to indicate that William Beckford was one such "obscured adept", and that he was "not aware", in the *early* years of his long life, of just "what he was". But that only made it the easier for him to maintain his disguise once he did "wake up"—and though this might be very hard to prove, certain changes in his outer life, and certain very striking incidents, as well as statements that he has left in writing, suggest that he himself was not unwilling to leave the indications of a dual interpretation for those with eyes to see, and that he had contacts with the inner world. Perhaps, moreover, the recrudescence of what might be termed outer interest in his life, with its concomitant publication of his hitherto unpublished writings and further letters, together with the similar revival of H.P.B.'s hint—which has lain fallow for fifty-one years—might be construed as indications of special significance, coming at this time. It is often darkest before the dawn; and we remember a prophetic statement made to Sinnett by Master K. H. in 1882—so full of promise to those who love England—"you are now approaching your brilliant noon". After all, Madame Blavatsky worked, and died, in England; and one would expect an English Adept, even "obscured" as in Kali Yuga, to take an active part in preparing for, and then perhaps later in leading his countrymen to the zenith of their sub-racial glory. What might not the magnificent army of England's War Dead accomplish, if, alive once more and reaping the harvest of their devotion and sacrifice, they went forward with opened eyes under such leadership?

William Beckford's life falls naturally into three main divisions; his youth, early years of writing and marriage; his residence abroad after his wife's death, including his presence in Paris during the French Revolution; and, third, his long years of comparative retirement in England. The periods covered would extend roughly from 1760 to 1786; from 1786 to 1796; and from 1796 to 1844. Each would seem to have made its particular contribution; and the whole span embraced great changes of momentous import in the history of England and of Europe. Beckford came of a very fine old English family, long settled in Gloucestershire, and the parish of Beckford is noted as the site of an ancient manor of that name, referred to in Domesday Book as *terra regis* in the time of William the Conqueror. Beckford himself was a student of heraldry, and claimed descent from all the Magna Charta barons who had surviving issue; and from seventy-one Knights of the Garter. He knew well that the old landed gentry were often of finer quality than many newly created peers, and wrote to a friend, Cyrus Redding, in 1838: "Nobles in the heraldic sense are not peers exclusively; they are those only who bear a coat of arms, the older are more noble—they need not have a title at all. A minister may make a peer of anybody, but he can only through the crown make a noble of inferior rank to a country gentleman whose family has long borne arms. On the continent a count may take precedence of a prince, if not of royal line, if he be a noble of older standing."[3] Moreover, Beckford seems to have thought of himself as something more than even an aristocratic commoner, because—and the attitude was typical of him—he

[3] *The Life and Letters of William Beckford of Fonthill*, by Lewis Melville, London, 1910; cf. pp. 280–282. This seems to be, on the whole, the best biography.

wrote to Lady Craven from Paris, 29 November, 1790: "What care I for Aristocrates or Democrates. I am an—Autocrate—determined to make the most of every situation".[4] This has a familiar ring about it. There were many soldiers in his ancestry, one of them, Sir William Beckford, was among the principal adherents of Richard III. "As such he loyally followed that monarch to the field of Bosworth, where he was probably killed" (*D. N. B.*, s. v. p. 80). After vicissitudes, Beckford's great, great grandfather went to Jamaica, where he and his descendants acquired almost fabulous wealth, and his great grandfather was made Lieutenant-Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the island by William III. Beckford's father returned to England, represented London in Parliament, became Lord Mayor; and just before his sudden death in 1770, made himself famous by resisting the King, and outfacing the monarch himself in a bold and resolute speech defending the City's rights. Beckford was then nine years old, only son and heir of the richest commoner in England, grandson through his mother of the sixth earl of Abercorn; living on a superb estate purchased and partly rebuilt by his father, with the world before him and every conceivable advantage.

He was educated by private tutors—his mother having a deeply rooted distrust of the brutal schools of that period, and also of the Universities. The disadvantage of such an upbringing has been pointed out by all his biographers, namely, that in many ways he was spoiled,—a fact which he clearly realized and stated later—and that he was often wilful, capricious, and undisciplined. But for his particular genius and destiny, it was probably an environment peculiarly fitted to cultivate those inner sensibilities which are *not* fostered by rough contact with the world. As a youth Beckford was highly imaginative, intensely sensitive, a lover of beauty and art in all its forms, who took music lessons from Mozart, composed, played, and sang beautifully himself (in later years Samuel Rogers spoke of hearing him play "with *unearthly* power"), and spent hours alone communing with nature. Chatham described him as "compounded of the elements of *air* and *fire*"; and all who knew him spoke of his brilliance, charm and originality. In his seventeenth year he was taken to Geneva to complete his education, and after a year and a half, returned home, and then made another extended European tour before returning to celebrate his majority. His tutors and friends particularly noted his gift for languages; for, besides unusual accomplishments in Greek and Latin, he read and spoke fluently French, German, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, and Arabic, and had some acquaintance with Persian, Hebrew, and probably other oriental languages, for it was these which especially fascinated him.

The next six years were spent in writing *Vathek*, and the *Episodes of Vathek* (not published till 1907-1912); in the study of politics, in social life, travel, marriage, and life mostly at Vevey and Paris. His numerous letters at this time reveal great inner struggles; steadily increasing insight into human nature and the meaning and real values of human life; continuous study of art, literature and

[4] Quoted in *The Life of William Beckford* by J. W. Oliver, D. Litt. (Edin.); Oxford University Press, 1932, p. 209,—which contains new and most interesting material, but from a point of view that cannot be recommended.

music; and a deepening maturity. Then came two catastrophes—a villainous scandal circulated and finally openly published about him, which resulted in "a storm of public obloquy", the cancellation of a peerage in the act of being conferred, and his ostracism by English society; and the sudden death of his wife at Vevey nine days after the birth of his second daughter. Calumny followed him even here, because the English papers circulated a statement that she died as the result of Beckford's brutality. This slander so outraged the citizens of Vevey, that of those who had known Beckford and his wife, twenty-eight of "the leading men of Vevey and its neighborhood, landowners, lawyers, doctors, and Calvinist ministers," on their own initiative "prepared a memorial protesting against it, and presented it to Beckford" (Oliver, *op. cit.*, pp. 197-8).

Beckford's friends rallied to his support, and for a while he wandered around Switzerland: " 'I lived in Switzerland among the Alps', he said fifty years later, 'at twenty-six, under a bitter domestic calamity. I found their solitudes soothe me as nothing else would—I have loved solitude more since' " (Oliver, p. 199). One is inclined to place his final awakening at this period. From 1786 to 1796 he resided mostly abroad, in Paris, Switzerland, and Portugal, travelling also extensively through Spain. He witnessed the destruction of the Bastille, remaining (though unaccountably to all outward seeming) in Paris through the Revolutionary years of 1791 and 1792 until he was forced to flee for his life to Lausanne,—where he bought Gibbon's library and settled down to read it. Finally, in 1796 he returned to Fonthill, and except for brief trips to France and Switzerland, made his permanent home in England thereafter. He entered, but with no enthusiasm, into political life from 1794 to 1806, when he definitely retired from it. His time was spent outwardly in building a new home, and in transforming his estate into a place of sumptuous beauty, collecting books, manuscripts, paintings, Orientalia, jades, marbles and bronzes until he had made it the show place of England. Five of his paintings are now in the National Gallery in London. Unfortunately, chancery lawsuits which were decided against him on legal technicalities, dishonest agents, and war taxes, deprived him of the major portion of his enormous wealth, so that in 1822 he sold Fonthill and the less choice portion of his collections for about £330,000, bought a place at Bath, built a new and splendid house and tower, Landsdown, filled it with his art treasures, created a magnificently landscaped estate about him out of the bare English downs, and lived in quiet retirement for twenty-two years into ripe old age, with every faculty intact. After only a week's illness of influenza, he died on May 2nd, 1844, in his eighty-fourth year, "with perfect resignation, and, we are told, so peacefully that those by his side could not tell the moment when he passed away" (Melville, *op. cit.*, p. 349). Not long before his death, he is reported to have said: "When I am summoned I must go, though I should not much mind living another hundred years, and, as far as my health goes at present, I see no reason why I should not" (*ibid.*, p. 344). It depends on who says this, as to what it means.

So much for the outer skeleton of Beckford's life. As will be seen, there is nothing to compel the attention of the student of occultism, and no outstanding

characteristic, either of saintliness or of mysticism, which would attract general notice. Biographies and literary criticisms unite in condemning Beckford because, with his wealth and position, he might have "done far more" with his life. Even in a literary way, they openly regret that he only gave the world one real work of genius, *Vathek*, written when he was twenty-two—though it should not be overlooked that he also published several volumes of travel which are classics of their kind, as well as some other tales of less importance. An attempt will be made to discuss these in a later article. Mr. Melville, his first recent biographer, thinks that to call Beckford's a "wasted life", is "a hard judgment". He adds: "Rather should it be said, taking into account the temptations—perhaps even greater in those days than in these—which encompass a millionaire, that on the whole he lived wisely and well" (p. 349). The best that has been said on his behalf, aside from praise of his literary genius, is by his latest biographer, Mr. Oliver (pp. 254-5)—a tribute all the more important because appearing in a book devoted exclusively to a most worldly appraisal of Beckford's life. If students of Theosophy would follow the clue offered in the verses quoted below, which Beckford himself left behind, they might come much closer to a true insight into his character.

In a turret rising from the south end of the St. Michael Gallery was Beckford's bedroom. It was a little circular room, plainly furnished, with book cases all round and with no provision for heating. He slept in a plain little camp bed from which he rose at six in the morning and, after taking some chicken broth, would go out to walk or ride about his grounds till breakfast. After breakfast he transacted household business with his steward. From twelve to two he would read or write or, if he had visitors, converse with them. He dined at half-past three and then, after coffee, went out on his horse, leaving behind any guests that he might have, and rode sometimes as much as twenty miles, which he could do without leaving his own grounds. The evening was spent in music and reading. His main occupations were looking after the fabric of the Abbey and planning improvements, buying new pictures and furniture and arranging those he already had, working out his lines of descent through all their ramifications and planning schemes of decoration to exhibit them adequately. It seems an idle and trivial enough kind of existence, but the survival of a few lines of verse written by Beckford during his Fonthill days enables us to see that there may have been another side to the picture, not apparent to the casual observer.

A Prayer

Like the low murmur of the secret stream,
Which through dark alders winds its shaded way,
My suppliant voice is heard: ah, do not deem
That on vain toys I throw my hours away!

In the recesses of the forest vale,
On the wild mountain, on the verdant sod,
Where the fresh breezes of the morn prevail,
I wander lonely, communing with God.

When the faint sickness of a wounded heart
Creeps in cold shudderings through my sinking frame,
I turn to Thee—that holy peace impart
Which soothes the invokers of Thy awful name.

O all-pervading spirit—sacred beam!
Parent of life and light!—Eternal Power!
Grant me, through obvious clouds, one transient gleam
Of Thy bright essence in my dying hour!

Conspicuous as Beckford's art collections and library, his upbuilding of Fonthill Abbey and Landsdown Tower, and his writings are, we should not forget his own plea: "Ah, do not deem that on *vain toys* I throw my hours away! . . . I wander lonely, communing with God."

Turning now with this in mind for intimations of an immortal consciousness either forcing its way, or revealing itself, through the personal mask, we find at once that the evidence is overwhelming. Students of Theosophy will see far more in Beckford's letters and writings than a mere oriental exuberance of imagination, or youthful dreaming. The power of *Vathek* lies in its stupendous portrayal of the fate that awaits those who give themselves over to the dominance of their lower nature. The *dénouement* of the story, with its picture of the Hall of Eblis and the punishment of sin in the eternal torments of unsatisfied desire, make it a tale of the deepest moral significance. This is equally true of *The Episodes of Vathek*, only quite recently published, but written during 1784-86.

In Beckford's youthful letters, we come across passage after passage revealing far more than a passionate attraction for things oriental, or delight in the beauties of nature. For example, he confided to one older friend, who had married his cousin: "There are moments already—when I think myself on the utmost verge of this troubled existence and fancy I hear low murmurs so strange and so mysterious that I more than half believe they come from another World" (1781; Oliver, pp. 71-2). His whole nature at this time was in constant ferment, trying to understand the experiences of all kinds which poured in upon him, and to adjust his own rich inner life to what he condemned as the low standards, vapid tastes, stupid criticisms, barren religion, and empty philosophy of those about him. No wonder he sought solitude, and no wonder, also, that, as a youth, he craved understanding and sympathy, and was inclined to be somewhat reckless in his relations with those who seemed able to offer it to him. When he was nineteen, he wrote:

The Winds are whispering to me the strangest things in the Universe and my ear is filled with aerial Conversations. What a multitude of Voices are borne on that blast from afar! . . . I walk to and fro in my Cell and fancy myself in the Caverns of *Chehabeddin* where every volume contained a Spirit. I lay my Ear close to them, listen and seem harkening to significant murmurs. The Soul of Plato talks to me from the Leaves, Homer gives responses—I am awed, I tremble—and wait their Dictates in respectful silence.

The Fires and Lamps burn around in Stillness, and it is this sacred Calm which invites departed Sages to my Cell. No one enters this Apartment, its Solitude is now unviolated. I alone am conscious what Treasures of Literature are deposited on every side and what exquisite productions of Art lie hid in its recesses. Here I pass whole hours in pleasing Dreams and employ my Majic Solely to raise Illusions. Innumerable Phantoms continually hover around me and the most splendid scenes instantaneously appear at my command.

Again:

One Evening as I took my solitary Ramble over the Hills, sad and pensive, mourning the

absence of those I love, the Sunset grew inconceivably splendid—the Caves of the sleepers were illuminated with the liveliest Red I ever beheld and the Country far around partook of the Refulgence. Not long could I contemplate the effect of this sudden Gleam; for the Clouds descending encircled the Spot on which I stood. Judge of my astonishment and whether it decreased when a melodious Voice whispered the words in my Ears, "Consider how fleeting is the breath of Life!—why then must that fleeting breath be wasted in vain Lamentations? Thou art approaching, O Mortal, each Hour to the fatal Boundary—beyond which are Regions whose mysteries it is not lawful to reveal. Till then bathe thy Spirits in delight and follow us to our Meads on the Summit of Amara, where thou may'st sleep undisturbed on the freshest Herbage till Winter is pass'd away."

Can you suppose I rejected so benign a proffer?—Without hesitation I committed myself to the warm Vapour that, drawing nearer and nearer, gilt the slopes of the Hills and, investing me, bore me I know not how into the Air. For several minutes I seemed ascending amongst Clouds of ruddy glowing Colours which concealed every other object from my Sight. All was stillness in this aerial journey except when the soft voice I had heard before sung that verse of *Mesihi's* you have known me so frequently to admire.

Be gay—too soon the flowers of Spring will fade.

This gentle admonition was repeated to me again and again; but with such infinitely varied cadence and harmonious modulation that I was grieved when it sounded no more. . . . Sometimes methinks I can distinguish the voices of those invisible Beings who brought me hither amongst the whispers of the Groves; but of this I am not quite certain, so faint is their melody. Everything in my present Visionary state is undecided, nor can I properly be said to hear distinctly or behold with clearness. Sounds reach me in confused but soothing murmurs and I survey the surrounding objects with Eyes half closed. To Day, however, the charm is somewhat broken, and rising from my verdant Couch I crossed the Lawn which forms the Summit of *Amara*. A Brook gurgling over some shining pebbles invited me to drink by its uncommon clearness. Never did I taste such limpid Waters! The refreshment they gave my whole frame cannot be described. In these moments I was more than Mortal and fancied I had drank at the celestial Fountain. As I was going once more to dip my hand into the stream, I seemed to hear the voice of my invisible Protectors in the impending Grove. Instantly I ran to the Spot from whence methought these sounds proceeded, but, alas, a deep silence again prevailed save when the Wind blew gently one bough against another (Melville, p. 75; and pp. 80-82).

In other letters, we find sentences such as these: "Few mortals except ourselves have ears to catch the low whisperings which issue in dark hours from the rocks" (Oliver, p. 57); or: "Ah, would I were acquainted with that mysterious Word, by pronouncing of which ancient Brachmans transported their Souls into Bodies of other Animals" (Melville, pp. 61-2). In a very long letter of 1778 (aged 18) to Alexander Cozens, a Russian water-colour painter of note, and reputed to be a natural son of Peter the Great, Beckford opened his heart in unusual fashion. Cozens' Asiatic blood and artistic temperament enabled him to sympathize with Beckford's devotion to the East, and to his oriental, or, as they were characterized, "to all his most fantastic and extravagant imaginings" (Oliver, p. 12). Readers of the QUARTERLY may form their own conclusions—though even lengthy extracts cannot do justice to the seven large printed pages of the whole.

The Dusk approaches. I am musing on the Plain before the House which my Father reared. No cheerful illuminations appear in the Windows, no sounds of Musick issue from the Porticos, no gay Revellers rove carelessly along the Colonnades; but all is dark, silent and abandoned. Such Circumstances suit the present tone of my mind. Did I behold a number of

brilliant Equipages rattling across the Lawn, or hear the confused buzz of animated Conversation, or were a peal of Laughter to reach my Ears or were they assaulted by shouts of hilarity and Joy, should I not fly to the woods for consolation and bury myself in their gloom to enjoy the solitude in security? . . . I surveyed my native prospects with fraternal affection and looked fondly on every tree as if we had been born in the same hour. The Air I breathed seemed nearer of Kin to me than that I had elsewhere respired; in short, the Hills, the Woods, the Shrubs, the very Moss beneath my Feet entered into this general Alliance and I fancied myself surrounded by an assembly of my best Friends and nearest Relations. Of what other Company then could I be ambitious? This was the spot, methought, as I looked on a round of Turf peculiarly green (and so sheltered by Banks and Shrubberies as to produce Violets even in this bleak Month), this was the spot perhaps where my Guardian Genius first spread over my infant Years the wings of protection. That round of Turf, those flowers, sprang from the benign influence of his approach and I shall ever regard them as memorials of his presence. The airy People who watch over Flowers beheld him descend and, willing to commemorate the Event, have sprinkled the Turf he selected with the purest Dew; therefore, it is green, therefore perfumed with Violets. An hour glided swiftly away whilst I was lost in these agreeable dreams . . .

I then ascended the steps which lead to a vast hall [in Fonthill] paved with Marble and seating myself, like the Orientals, on Cushions of Brocade placed by a blazing fire, was served with Tea and a species of white bread which had crossed the *Atlantic*. Meanwhile my thoughts were wandering into the interior of Africa and dwelt for hours on those Countries I love. Strange tales of Mount Atlas and relations of Travellers amused my fancy. One instant I imagined myself viewing the marble palaces of Ethiopean princes, seated on the green woody margin of Lakes, studded in sands and wildernesses, the next transported me to the Rocks of *Carena* where Atlantes strove vainly to preserve Rugiero from the Perils of War. Some few minutes after, I found myself standing before a thick wood listening to impetuous water falls and screened from the Ardour of the Sun by its foliage. I was wondering at the Scene when a tall comely Negro wound along the slopes of the Hills, and without moving his lips made me comprehend I was in Africa, on the brink of the *Nile* beneath the Mountains of *Amara*. I followed his steps thro' an infinity of irregular Vales, all skirted with Rocks and blooming with an aromatic vegetation, till we arrived at the hollowed Peak and after exploring a Labyrinth of paths, which led to its summit, a wide Cavern appeared before us. Here I surveyed landscapes of the most romantic Cast, tasted such fruits and scented such perfumes as ravished my senses. I was all Delight and amazement. We entered the Cavern and fell prostrate before the sacred source of the Nile which issues silently from a deep Gulph in the Rock. Suddenly the spirit of Father *Ureta* rose like a mist from the Chasm and seizing me with its influence, discovered the interior of the Cave, ascended thro' the Mountain, and brought me swiftly to a Castle with many towers of grotesque Architecture. There I saw huge treasures and crowds of unknown Mortals walking in vaulted Halls whose stately arches impressed veneration. Here were deposited ancient records and Histories of which the rest of Men are ignorant, poems sung by the Choirs of Paradise, and volumes which contain the sage Councils of Abraham delivered by that Patriarch in the plains of *Mamre*. Busy multitudes were continually shifting from Place to Place; but before I could notice their Occupations, the Spirit snatched me away with such inconceivable rapidity that I knew not how I was conveyed to a small Lawn circled by Rocks and falling streams mingled with Woods and hanging Meadows, where Leopards and Antelopes browzed fearlessly together, and birds justly denominated of Paradise fluttered round the flowers, whilst the Phœnix such as Poets describe soared into the blue Aether and glistened in every beam. A bright sun shining full on the glowing Colours of the Scene o'erpowerd my sight and obliged me to seek the Woods whose Shade and Fragrance delighted me beyond conception; but I was not long suffered to enjoy them. Some irresistible Impulse drove me to the extremity of the Lawn, where I recoiled with Horror and Amazement at the sight of a Precipice whose Basis seemed to rest on the surface of our Globe. A faint blueish Mist veiled the Seas and Continents and it was in vain that I strove to distinguish the Mountains from the Plains, or the Lakes from the Valleys. The Spirit skimmed

by me once more like a transitory breeze, and after hovering for some moments round the nearest pinnacle of Rocks stood calmly at my side. Thou art gazing, whispered a thin airy voice, at the Fortunate Mountain of Paradise. Those Groves, those woody Vales afforded a retreat to the first of Men. That very herbage was the bed on which he reposed. The stately birds that move around us once held familiar converse with him and still mourn the moment when fiery seraphim drove him trembling down yonder declivities, no more to taste these clear fountains or sleep in his native Bowers, the Regions of perpetual Spring, where all the dreams of inspired Bards are realized. I would tell thee more, but mark how the World below fades gradually on the sight, the Seas and Rivers begin to glimmer thro' the Dusk and catch a faint beam of the rising Moon. The moment is drawing near when thy stay is unlawful and prophane. This bright light will soon yield to a silver Dawn and during the consecrated hours the spirits of holy prophets descend and converse of Men. I was once a mortal; my affections still hover round the Globe and it is with impatience I wait the period when we are permitted to discourse on earthly subjects. That period will soon arrive; for hark, the Angels who are directing our planet are beginning their nightly hymn. Behold how the Clouds fleet that waft them above the Poles. Listen! their Carol is echoed by the Mountains, it sounds amongst the spheres. Hark, it is answered by the Guardians of the Moon, faint, very faint, is their melody, how it dies away amongst distant Worlds!

The spirit ceased. My Soul was thrilled with the celestial Choirs. A fresh wind waved all the Trees and ruffled the herbage and in an instant Myriads of lovely forms glanced amongst the woods. I heard the Voices of departed Friends and tried to spring towards the Meads whence the sounds proceeded; but the Breezes that swept along the Lawn were far too pure for my mortal frame. I trembled, my heart beat, my Arteries throbbed, in vain I attempted to join the beckoning shades, some dreadful pressure chained me to the ground, in vain I called to those I loved, my lamentations and loud Cries were lost in the gales. How many times did I stretch forth my Arms and attempt advancing—all my endeavours were fruitless, and, unable to struggle more, I sunk beneath my sorrow and beating my breast, exclaimed—Ah, would that I might die! At length I found myself released, and with a violent effort ran or rather flew upon the Lawn; but as I advanced the Forms retreated, a confused murmur of Rills of Voices and of Instruments fled before me, the Rocks, the Woods, the whole prospect seemed in motion, and as it floated away I followed, till, impelled by the swiftness of my steps, I shot headlong from the edge of the Mountain and kept falling, continually falling, till lost in immensity. The Horror and amazement of my Descent dissolved the Dream. I started up, staring wildly around, and, when Sense and Recollection returned, found myself extended in the same Hall, by the same Pillars as before, the Fire expiring and its embers just glooming thro' the shade (Melville, pp. 60-65).

The reference at so early an age to what Beckford calls "my Guardian Genius", is most significant; and the sense of it never left him, because we find him writing to his cousin by marriage six years later, in 1784: "Have you not repeatedly had reason to believe that I am watched over by a guardian power—that an invisible protection invests me that has not hitherto failed upon any occasion either with respect to animals or the Lords of the creation themselves?" (Oliver, p. 171).

These extracts, brief as they necessarily are in the compass of a magazine article, surely need no elucidation, because they reveal a nature inundated with intimations from the other world, but unable as yet to understand their full import and significance. Beckford was slowly coming to his real self—these early letters show to how rich and elevated an inner life.

In conclusion two further incidents can be given, both extremely revealing. Beckford was the polar opposite of his compatriots in his love for animals, and

his detestation of all killing for sport. He had his estate secured from the depredations of fox-hunting neighbours by a high stone wall, seven miles in extent, and his letters are full of references to the senseless cruelty and baseness of hunting. A letter in 1817 from Lady Bessborough to Lord Gower, describing a visit of Samuel Rogers to Fonthill, depicts a charming scene when the party started on a ride about the estate: "They were met at the setting out by a flock of tame Hares, that Mr. Beckford feeds; then Pheasants, then Partridge". We recollect that the taming of wild animals has always been one of the powers of the Occultist. The following incident, as related by Beckford, occurred in Paris early in 1784. He had, with a party of ladies, and under the guidance of the young Comte de Buffon, son of the famous naturalist, gone to the Jardin du Roi, where at this time there was a large collection of animals.

You may well suppose my eyes were averted right willingly from this ghastly object [a Hyena] to the Queen of the brute creation, the famous Lioness—renowned for her extraordinary size and superior comeliness. She was lying in her handsome Pavilion—with her glorious muzzle between her enormous paws, I thought in great dudgeon, an opinion not shared it would seem by her keeper, for he entered her iron palace without any ceremony. She rose up with an air of serene, not offended majesty, stood stock still, and began looking me full in the face with singular earnestness. I returned this mark of attention by looking at her in my turn to the full as decidedly. By degrees her eyes appeared to change colour and lose their fierceness. Finding that my intense manner of gazing produced a favourable effect I tried to confirm it by talking to her with every variety of sound I was master of, modulating my voice into the most opposite tones, sometimes gentle, sometimes peremptory. She answered me by the strangest of subdued growls it is possible to form any conception of. All on a sudden she became as good humouredly playsome as the most familiar of parlour spaniels—threw herself on her back, rollicking and frolicking about in the highest glee conceivable—her immense mouth, as red and as large pretty nearly as a heated oven, wide open the whole time as if distended by a fit of laughter. She now uttered a sort of comfortable chuckling sound, which I answered by an imitation of this strange noise which was crowned by the most perfect success—for the keeper, turning round to me with an obsequious bow, said aloud, "Monsieur, you have won the affections of the Lioness so completely that if you have any curiosity to enter within these bars and even touch her, you may with entire security. She is not more kindly disposed towards myself than towards you. I have had a long experience of her habits. I can interpret her looks and her language. She has taken a fancy to you. She wants you to show her marks of kindness. Advance—you need not hesitate. I will stake my life upon the gentleness of her behaviour."

An invitation so consonant to my own interior wishes was immediately accepted, and I entered the cage with such a pure and perfect confidence as totally precluded the sensation of fear. I smoothed down the enormous paw which the keeper took up and held forth to me—leisurely and deliberately touching one after the other the terrific talons with which it was adorned. While I was thus engaged, the Royal Captive lowered her head mildly,—half closing her eyes as if disposed to fall quickly asleep. You know my predilection for animals and to think I possessed the power of conciliating one so formidable enchanted me beyond idea. The uncommon sounds which had been issuing from the Lioness's abode during the last half hour drew a crowd of idle spectators around us, whose surprise at seeing me quite at home in so perilous a situation passed all bounds. Had these good people beheld the Prophet Daniel himself in the Babylonian den, or the three holy children walking unsinged through Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace, they could not have testified a greater degree of astonishment.

"Can this be possible?" exclaimed forty or fifty voices in chorus! "What talisman does this young gentleman possess?" "Who ever before took a Lioness in this fashion by the paw?" "How the d——l did she suffer such an audacious liberty?"

"Ah, messieurs," replied the keeper, "*Qui peut répondre des caprices des Dames?—pas moi assurément.*" This was convincing—every one felt the truth of the observation from his own experience, and everyone withdrew shrugging up his shoulders—gesticulating with his hands and pesting and diabling with heart and soul against the Englishman, whose boldness, or rather impudence *they thought* far more deserving of reproof than admiration.

I had not quitted my beloved's grated boudoir, nor relinquished fondling her lovely paw, when Lady Clarges, Robert, Miss Carter, and the Comte de Buffon came up. I thought poor Lady Clarges would have fainted, so great was her terror at this unexpected spectacle. Her faithful companion bore the strange sight with masculine fortitude—Monsr. de Buffon with a something not unlike national jealousy. All agreed in pronouncing it to be one of the most decided instances of love at first sight on the part of the Lioness, and of very unwise hardiness on mine, ever heard of. Robert, who is as lively as light and remarkably fond of everything out of the common routine, was in perfect ecstacy. "I will set off", he said, "without a moment's delay and tell Monseigneur le Comte d'Artois [brother of Louis XVI, afterwards Charles X] what I have seen, but can scarcely credit. Adieu, Milord, Notre père Adam was a fool to you." . . .

Before closing my letter, I must not forget informing you, that the Lioness expressed her sorrow for my departure by setting up a roar so loud, so vigorous, so terrible, that it seemed to shake the Cage, I had but just quitted, to its very foundation. My whole party shuddered and looked aghast. I, for my own part, felt a more uneasy sensation, when reflecting upon the risk I had run of being snapped up by this tremendous vocalist than at the moment of actual danger.

Do not imagine, however, that I shall cease following up my "bonne fortune". I mean to visit her Leonine Majesty to-morrow and many a to-morrow, I hope, after that.

A note by Beckford, written later, is of interest.

I went at least 20 times after this to the Jardin du Roi, and was invariably received by the Lioness with the most evident marks of affection. Upon my return to Paris from Spain in 1788 she recognized me the very instant I appeared before her. The same keeper preceded me into the same cage where she lay extended with her young. He took up one of the Cubs and gave it into my hand, she looking on with the utmost complacency. After caressing it with sincere fondness, I returned it myself to the Mother, who showed every sign of approbation and even manifested an intention of licking my hand . . . (Oliver, pp. 168-170).

Shortly after the above incident, Beckford describes another, which is of particular interest. The Secret Societies in France at this time were numerous —some good, some active agents of the black powers. Cagliostro was creating a sensation in Bordeaux and Lyons, and came in 1785 to Paris; Mesmer cured Beckford's cousin, Louisa, in the spring of 1784; the great Masonic Convention, attended by St. Germain, Cagliostro and Mesmer, was held in Paris, also in 1785; and Beckford himself, apparently as a mere spectator of the scene, was openly prophesying revolution and disaster. It would appear from the following account, carefully written by Beckford and preserved in a folder labelled, "Mysterious Visit—the Grim Visaged Old Man, etc.", that one of these groups on the dark side, plotting the overthrow of society, and with real occult power behind it, sought to "get" Beckford. Their failure on this occasion was followed a few months later by the vicious attack and public calumny which broke out in England shortly after Beckford's return there. It is not the least of the signs that Beckford was in truth an Adept of the White Lodge, that the dark powers, after trying fruitlessly to win him to their side or get him into their power, thereupon hurled at him their deadliest weapons—weapons best calculated to ruin a man's

effectiveness for any good work by robbing him of his fair name, and people of all faith in him. Two years before, Beckford had enlisted, at Fonthill, the services as painter and decorator of a man named de Loutherbourg, a member of the French Academy, who had revolutionized for Garrick in London the method of setting stage plays, and had invented the devices, still in use, of reproducing thunder, howling winds, falling rain, etc. Now de Loutherbourg was intimate with, and a follower of Cagliostro, to whom he gave hospitality in 1786, when Cagliostro stayed in London for a year. In 1789, de Loutherbourg openly set up for himself as "a healer by personal magnetism", charging nothing to the multitudes of invalids who thronged him. "Then the tide turned against him, and his house was besieged by a mob, and he soon after left for the Continent, where he and his wife travelled with Cagliostro"—until the latter's imprisonment in Rome (Oliver, p. 88, n. 2). Beckford's reference in 1784 to his contact with de Loutherbourg suggests that the latter had not greatly impressed him with whatever display of phenomenal powers he had exhibited at Fonthill in 1782. Whatever may lie back of these contacts, on this later occasion in Paris the forces hurled at Beckford made him "gasp and writhe as if under the actual and immediate pressure of some horrid occult influence". As the full account covers nine pages of small type, it must necessarily be condensed here (see Oliver, pp. 172-181.)

I will proceed to relate to you without omission or exaggeration the particulars of a mysterious occurrence which reduces to insignificance all Loutherbourg's specious wonders—something unaccountable, I was going to say superhuman—something that "froze my young blood" and made me gasp and writhe as if under the actual and immediate pressure of some horrid occult influence. You remember, no doubt, the architect who made those extravagant plans for Villa Pitt, your mother so wisely rejected—the famous Le Doux—the very prince of pomposity and ponderosity. . . . Last week, at his own house, which, by the bye, is one of the strangest mock-palaces you ever saw, he allowed me to tumble over all his sketches of public and private buildings. . . . From amongst those designs . . . slipped out a beautiful drawing of a ceiling in colours heightened with gold. I admired it enthusiastically—he saw I did, but instead of expressing pleasure at my approbation—as he often had done on similar occasions, he put on a look of mysterious gravity and upon my questioning him about this ceiling whether it had been executed in town or country—where if in Paris and for whom—adding how particularly desirous I felt of seeing it—he replied in an altered tone of voice, "This is the ceiling of the most sumptuous apartment I ever erected—it belongs to a reverend friend of mine, whose thoughts, words, and actions are not of the common world—his habits, his appearance, his garb are peculiar—very peculiar—so much so indeed, that he never wishes to manifest himself—unless to persons born under peculiar influences. As I am inclined to believe you to be one of that number—although I know him to be the reverse of partial to your nation—perhaps he may consent to receive you—at any rate I will inform him of your wishes—and take his commands—but remember—you cannot be allowed to use your own carriage—you must place yourself under my sole guidance in an ordinary fiacre—the shutters closed—nor am I at liberty to inform you in what part of Paris this habitation is situated—you must promise to ask no questions concerning what you may see or hear at the place to which it may be my good fortune to conduct you." Not in the least intimidated by all this mystery I consented to accompany him in the manner prescribed. . . . After an early dinner, I entered the fiacre waiting at his door, and drawn by two miserable hacks. We set forth on our mysterious expedition. How long we kept turning and winding I cannot exactly tell. I should think more than an hour had elapsed when he thrust his head out of the window, and

ordered the coachman to stop. We got out, and I saw before me a long line of greyish, moss-eaten stone wall like the wall of a burying ground. It had nothing to do, however, with an enclosure of that species of dismality. The gates opening I found myself in a vast space entirely occupied by wood-piles, some of enormous dimensions and very lofty, others with thatched roofs acutely pointed, resembling views I have seen of Tartarian villages. Apparently endless avenues were formed by these innumerable accumulations of timber cloven and uncloven—but neither the sound of the axe, nor any other sound was heard, except the chirping of sparrows, which were careering about in such myriads as to form dense clouds in several parts of the cold, clear horizon. Passing down one of the very long alleys these wood-piles almost entirely darkened—we paused before the largest of the assemblage. A few loose boards were placed leaning carelessly against its side. These, my conductor having removed, a low, rough door, scarcely distinguishable from the logs around it, discovered itself, against which he knocked twice. At the second knock, the door flew open with a sharp whistle, and we entered a gloomy vestibule, more like a barn than a Hall, into which but a few straggling rays of light penetrated through leaded casements high in the roof. Almost groping our way through this uncouth and hideous apartment, we came to another very low door, and having again knocked, were admitted into a plain room, like the chamber of a cottage with its deal table and straw-bottomed chairs, overlooking a little garden surrounded by well-clipped hedges. The wicket of this rusticated place opened into an apartment rather better proportioned and better furnished. . . . We advanced therefore in no very cheerful mood into a lofty square room decorated with marble pilasters and lighted from above—in one corner of which, on a high gilded perch stood a very large cockatoo with its head under its wing apparently fast asleep. As we glided along over a polished oaken floor quite stealthily, we did not disturb him. A grand portal standing wide open—its tapestry curtains having been drawn completely aside—admitted us into a saloon of more than regal magnificence—evidently designed by my conductor in his proudest, palatial style. The coved ceiling, richly painted with mythological subjects in pannels of stucco-work as gorgeously as the roof of St. Peter's, exhibited the utmost variety of ornament—trophies, fruit and flowers combined together with all the pomp and vanity of Le Brun. Under a superb chimney piece blazed a fire composed of some sort of exotic wood that emitted a spicy fragrance. Right in front of this aromatic fire, I beheld a formal looking old man of small stature, but imposing presence, seated in a chair of uncommon shape and elaborate workmanship. He was habited in an antiquated court suit of changeable coloured silk—his severe forbidding countenance was overspread with the livid paleness of a dead body, but his eyes were as the eyes of the living—most vivid and most piercing. He gave us no hospitable look, he bade us no welcome—and without rising from his seat scarcely acknowledged our profound salutations by a slight inclination of his head. His lips quivered incessantly—as if he had a great deal to communicate but the only words that escaped them were these: "Examine the works of art this apartment contains, at your entire leisure: they merit a deliberate survey". Happy to seize the opportunity so oracularly offered, I ran eagerly to several antique busts of the purest Grecian sculpture and a landscape by Titian equally worthy of admiration. All around the room, on every side—in every recess—the most superb armoires of brass and tortoise shell presented themselves, intermingled with cabinets rich in clustered gems and polished mosaic pannels, not exceeded, I am quite certain, in point of beauty and costliness by the most valuable specimens of this species of furniture secluded in the Palazzo Vecchio itself—but the object of all others which attracted my attention was a bronze cistern of enormous size raised on a block of greenish porphyry—its immense handles, composed of tritons and nereids, designed and executed in the grandest gusto of Michael Angelo. This colossal vessel was filled to the brim with water of a transparent clearness. As I stood contemplating the last gleams of a ruddy sun-set reflected on its placid surface—the old man, risen at length from his stately chair, approached—and no sooner had he drawn near, than the water becoming agitated rose up in waves. Upon the gleaming surface of the undulating fluid,—flitted by a succession of ghastly shadows, somewhat resembling, I thought, the human form in the last agonies of dissolution—but as these horrid appearances passed along with inconceivable swiftness, I distinguished little,—quite sufficient,

however, to impart a thrill of terror to my whole frame it never had experienced before. Although I had made up my mind to remain impassive, and to express no surprise at any thing, I could not help exclaiming aloud—"This is most frightfully extraordinary". "A great deal more extraordinary than you seem to be aware of,"—answered the pale old man, in chilling accents accompanied by a look of such singular malignity that I turned round to the architect to enquire of him—(a mortal being at least)—what all these unaccountable and frightful appearances could possibly mean. Instead of a reply, Le Doux only shook his head and when I turned mine back again the agitated water had subsided into its former calm. Just at this moment, the sound of full, deep, most powerful voices—singing or rather chanting in perfect tune and perfect unison, poured itself into all the porches of my ear—proceeding, it would seem, from some apartment beyond the principal portal of the saloon. "If you wish to approach nearer to these singers," said the old man, "pass through that door," and he pointed to one whose valves opened, sympathetically as it were, whilst he was addressing me. "By all means avail yourself of this gracious permission," whispered Le Doux, "and you will see a staircase of my design and construction of which I am very proud." He had reason to be so, for the flight of steps seen in perspective through the portal was most majestic and its vaulted roof, a miniature copy of the scala reggia of the Vatican, strikingly beautiful. Ascending these steps followed by the old man and the Architect, I passed through another portal into a tribune room from whence I looked down into what appeared to be a chapel of considerable magnitude. Day was closing in, and darkness beginning to prevail when suddenly a stream of light, such as might be supposed to emanate from the tapers of an altar, shone forth through the perforations of a lofty screen of carved work. At the same time the voices which had attracted me to this place were heard most solemnly and sonorously chaunting psalms. I plainly distinguished amongst many verses of the royal prophets a passage of the Magnificat which declares the mighty fallen and the meek exalted (*deposuit potentes de sede et exaltavit humiles*) to which appalling decree the invisible choristers, by giving additional depth of sound, imparted a tremendous energy. Kneeling on the rich cushions of the tribune, my face buried in my hands—my mind lost in doubts and conjectures, my sense of hearing totally absorbed in the awful sounds which filled the chapel and were redoubled by the echoes of its arches I gave way to that profound corroding melancholy which is seldom relieved by tears. How long I remained plunged in my mournful reverie I am not exactly sensible, but the full recollection of what I had lately seen—(the frightful shapes, the unaccountable phantoms) again coming over me, I recited—from my inmost spirit, that best of prayers, "Deliver us from evil," with heart-felt devotion. It would ill befit me to think or say my petition was unaccepted; for upon turning round to discover from whence a deep sigh I heard proceeded, behold, the aged man had retired—I had almost written vanished. Be that as it may—the Architect, who was still visible, looked doubly serious and ghastly by the faint and lurid gleam which reached me. I ventured to say to him, "To what Convent is the Chapel below annexed, and to what order do these monks belong, whose voices I hear ascending from behind the screen of the choir?" "If this were a chapel," replied the Architect, "you must pardon me not disclosing its name—remember our agreement. Let it suffice for you to know that this truly sacred edifice is set apart for a high, tho' not entirely religious purpose. Let me entreat you to abstain from asking me any more questions: they would answer no efficient end, for I perceive with sorrow and disappointment you are not the resolute, enthusiastic young man I took you for, and which the scene at the Jardin du Roi, described to me by an eye witness, led me to imagine. You have lost an opportunity of gaining knowledge which may never return. Had you undergone a slight ceremony, we were on the point of proposing, you might have asked any question, however abstruse, with the certainty of its being resolved. You would not only have heard—but seen things ineffable—but no more upon this subject. I can divine without supernatural aid what is passing in your mind at this moment. You have made your choice—follow it. You shall always find me the same friend, the same equally devoted servant." So saying—with an expression of countenance somewhat at variance with the latter protestation—he observed it was growing late, and that it was time I should be returned to my hearth (*à mes foyers*). I answered not a word. . . . Silently and sullenly

therefore did we retrace our steps through the same apartments. The fire in the regal saloon, reduced to glowing embers, cast a glooming light on the surrounding objects just sufficient to make them indistinctly visible. The immense bronze vase had disappeared, so had the stately chair upon which the old man had been seated, and so had the white bird in the adjoining room, which we traversed as well as the cottage chamber. When we had passed through the Barnish Hall, which was now lighted by a brazen lamp of large dimensions—we regained the open air. It was a clear, frosty night. I blessed the host of heaven which were shining brilliantly, and my own star in particular which had led me unpledged and uninjured from this very suspicious place of bedevilment and mystery. An impish looking lad with a lanthorn in his hand emerged from a dark shed most opportunely for the purpose of lighting us through the dreary labyrinth of woodpiles. After straying between them a long half hour—I heard a horse cough, and thought the sound quite musical, so eager did I feel to re-enter the common world. An anxious minute more was passed in scrambling over the scattered trunks of timber trees, when a door opened in the wall of this vast enclosure and there stood our carriage, safe enough,—into which I jumped with the greatest alacrity. For the first ten minutes we exchanged not a syllable. At length, I broke silence by saying to my petrified companion, "Remember Luciennes and my introduction to Madame du Barri". This application produced a change from *grisaille* to *couleur de rose*. He resumed his accustomed suavity of manners, and, when arrived at my hotel, we parted, apparently as good friends as ever.

Where the "old man" was first mentioned in the text, Beckford added a most interesting note, the significance of which will be appreciated by all those who are students of the French Revolution, and especially of the rôle the Secret Societies played in preparing for that catastrophe:

I have strong reason to suspect that this austere, grim-visaged old man was the identical personage who, not long before the out-break of the French Revolution, conducted the wretched D. of Orleans into the dismal dreary plain of Villeneuve St. Georges—where—at midnight—surrounded by horrible phantoms—a talismanic ring was given him, in which having placed a Macbeth-like confidence, he was led on, step by step, to the fatal scaffold.

See *Mémoires de Soulavie*, Vol. 6, page 59.

In conclusion, it will be noted that every one of H.P.B.'s descriptive phrases is literally fulfilled. Beckford was "a victim of your British laws [Chancery suits] and Mrs. Grundy [ostracized because of vicious slanders]; one who was once upon a time some forty years ago [1882 − 40 = 1842, two years before Beckford's death], a highly educated Squire, rich, and a Chief Justice in his county [H.P.B. means a county Justice of the Peace, which Beckford had been], a Greek and Latin scholar". Moreover, the glyph signature, with its bold curve and heavily stroked, slightly wavy lines, bears a noticeable resemblance to a facsimile of Beckford's handwriting as of 1780, reproduced in Mr. Guy Chapman's recent *Bibliography*, plate IV.

Madame Blavatsky concluded her paragraph with the words: "and that's all I am allowed to tell you". May we not be grateful now for "hints" which lead us to such further and most interesting discoveries.

QUÆSITOR.

LETTERS FROM W. Q. JUDGE

THE introduction to the letters published in the January issue of the QUARTERLY, covers most of the present series. I was still travelling and lecturing, trying to keep Judge informed of all that happened, and to entertain him in so far as it was possible to extract amusement from incidents of "the campaign". If, when I met and stayed with him at Aiken, I had had wit enough to show him the envelopes of his letters, covered as they were with evidence of my unaccustomed but continued efforts to keep a record of my expenditures, he would have been more amused than by anything I could have written to him. On the envelope of the first of the present letters, addressed to me in the care of J. Frank Knocke, Esq., Kansas City, he would have found that breakfast cost 90 cents, dinner 70 cents, tip at lunch (no record of the lunch itself) 10 cents, tobacco (some of us, following the example of H.P.B., still "rolled our own") 16 cents, and an undecipherable abbreviation, $1.30, with a (?) following it as an admission either of fallibility or despair.

[Postmarked] AIKEN, S. C., November 27th, 1895.

Dear Ernest,

All yours received. Excellent, and delightful to me.

Review *Brother of the Third Degree* by all means: 175 words only. Better send to Griscoms to go in with the rest, but you have to sign it E.T.H. In forwarding to them, say I asked you.

Yes, I've been haunting you with my numerous thoughts.

The St. Louis work will some day have to be repeated. We must not let it go. It is the strongest Catholic centre in the U. S. We will talk it over if we meet here. Did people of the name of ——— come at all around? If so, it is only another act of toadyism. You do not mention them. They could do the Branch good, for they are wealthy and up in society. It is the old story.

I have written to Dr. Lopez, New Orleans. I suspect that Branch is one that lives on its own very badly nourished vitals. You will have to seek some hole in the cuticle to inject the auric gold. In all this do not forget you are me and acting for me.

Now when you are on the way to this spot you must let me know in advance so that I can arrange. If here at that time I want you to stay a week or so. These "ifs" are because I am not fixed here, and an accident might send me back to New York. In that case it will be even better.

Do not credit news about me save what you get from myself. Exaggeration, misobservation and lying are the diseases of the day.

Yes, I think often of that book. We must soon get at it. Times are marching on. I have not yet had the monition to get out that circular to the Branches.

Do you watch yourself in respect to praise and attention, and their effect on you? This is very important at your stage of the game.

James Pryse is coming soon. I can manage him if no one else can, and it was so prearranged by the powers some years ago.

Well, good-bye dear boy,

As ever,

W.

James Pryse was really devoted to Judge at that time, winning all hearts that felt as he did, my own included. He wrote in Judge's defence, and, later, in tribute to Judge's memory, with a simple and beautiful eloquence which is as moving to-day as when it flowed from the depths of his soul; and because he is not what he was, but, like the church of Ephesus, has left his "first love", I include here as a memorial to the man I then knew, part of his tribute to the man (Judge) whose unshakable and grateful loyalty to H.P.B. set an example which some of us would like to feel, when death comes, that we had tried to emulate. At times I wonder how many of Judge's former friends, when they meet him "over there", will care to look him in the eyes. He will forgive them, but will they be able to forgive themselves?

. . . In his recognition of the presence of the Divine in all things, and in his patient acceptance of existing conditions, lay the strength of William Q. Judge. Memories of the ancient glories of mankind were his, and visions still more glorious of man's distant future; yet he worked contentedly with the homely materials at hand, told the old truths in a new way adapted to the times, simply, unpretentiously, and neither offending against the spirit of the age nor making those truths appear commonplace and ignoble. He knew the workings of the human heart and mind apart from all the changing conditions of civilizations; and he reconciled the dreamy mysticism of the East with the surging activity of the West. Ignoring the external phases of life, he strove, not to bring about a return to the ancient order of things, but to restore the essential principles of religion which had become obscured in this age of transition, so that out of the confused elements of the mighty West a nobler system might be formed, and a loftier temple to Truth be builded, than ever Antiquity knew.

To this end he patiently toiled and taught, unweariedly. Against all the adverse conditions of this crude age of conflicting forces, against the treachery of friends, and against the opposition of the powers that war against man's spiritual progress, he finished the work that was given him to do, even though the results of that work still lie in the distant future.

When the Gnosis is known once more among men; when the temple of the Mysteries is restored; when, turning from all eidolons, men become as of old, adorers of the Beautiful, the True, and find within themselves that divine nature which this dark age has hidden, then it will be recognized that the strong hand of William Q. Judge prepared the ground and gathered the material for that mystic temple for which any building of marble or granite can be no more than a symbol.

In his death he triumphed. As, in many an ancient legend, the dead hero becomes a star in the heavens, so in the apotheosis of this hero let us see the star that foretells the Dawn of a new day of the Sacred Mysteries on this the newest and yet the oldest of earth's continents.[1]

[Postmarked] AIKEN, S. C., November 29th, 1895.

Dear Ernest,

I enclose a paper which speaks for itself. I want you to read it carefully,

[1] "The Morning-Star of the Mysteries", by James M. Pryse; *Theosophy*, July, 1896.

but soon, and give me your opinion as to propriety, probable result and contents of text. I will say frankly I don't like this sort of thing, though long expecting it. There is a lurking desire to manage and to go on with these meanderings, often maunderings.

Return paper with your comments and at *same time* write separately any letter as usual that I can let Mrs. J[udge] see.

As ever,

4.

Mrs. Judge died on April 17th, 1931.

In its issue of January, 1931, the Adyar (Mrs. Besant's) magazine began the publication of some confidential letters written by Judge to Olcott in 1877 and 1879, after H.P.B. and Olcott had left New York for India. In these and subsequent early letters, Judge poured out his heart to Olcott (the older man), with intimate, personal details of the misery of his relations with Mrs. Judge, whom he had married before he had heard of Theosophy, or had met H.P.B., or had begun to "find himself". To have published such letters at any time would seem a strange proceeding,—although, on second thought, when people crown themselves publicly with tiaras of occult Initiations, they must necessarily have dispensed themselves from trifles such as ordinary good taste. Not to have waited until Mrs. Judge was dead—to have published such letters during her lifetime (in the February and March as well as January issues)—seems to suggest that the dispensation carried much further,—into the region of things "simply not done". Mrs. Besant might plead ignorance as to whether Mrs. Judge was alive or dead, but would fail to add the damning truth that she did not care. If she had cared, she would have found out,—easily.

The publication of those letters from Judge to Olcott ceased in December, 1931, with a letter dated July 15th, 1884. Why were no later letters published? The answer is simple. In an "Editorial Note" following the last letter printed it was stated that: "The letters were published with two objects: first, to give new matter to the historians of the Theosophical Society and Movement, who are many [if that had been the motive, why stop with the letter of July, 1884?]; second, to show how futile is the attempt made by some Theosophical organizations to dethrone Colonel Olcott from his rightful place by the side of H. P. Blavatsky and put in his place W. Q. Judge. . . . Nor is there the slightest sign that Mr. Judge ever doubted in any manner Colonel Olcott's position as the leader and his, W. Q. Judge's, as the loyal assistant." In brief, and brushing aside the disingenuousness, these very early letters were published in an effort to show that Judge looked up to Olcott as a superior, while their publication ceased with the letter of July, 1884, because later letters would increasingly have proved the opposite, and would have defeated Mrs. Besant's purpose. Judge had met H.P.B. in France during the spring of 1884, when on his way to India; he arrived at Adyar toward the end of July, while Olcott was in Europe, and it did not take him long to discover that Olcott's native vanity had grown since the early days in New York until Olcott had become disloyal to H.P.B.—

a disloyalty which became notorious in 1888, and which went from bad to worse until Olcott died in 1907. Everyone, with any inner knowledge of the Movement, knows that while Olcott was going downhill, Judge was steadily fighting his way uphill, from one degree of attainment to another.

The fact is that the publication of those letters proved nothing, except, first, the truth of a great Master's statement, through H.P.B., that Judge, "of all Chêlas, suffers most and demands or even expects the least"; and, second, that Adyar has not learned, and never will, that honesty is the best policy.

As Mrs. Judge is no longer living it is now possible, and, in view of Mrs. Besant's "indiscretion", necessary, to state the essentials: Mrs. Judge was a very ordinary woman, Judge was a very extraordinary man; he was an occultist and an ascetic, Mrs. Judge was not; he married her when he was very young, and regretted it as soon as he "broke through"; she resented his devotion to Theosophy, and, as a woman, was intensely and foolishly jealous. In other words, she regarded him as her lawful property, and so, inevitably, made herself a heavy burden in Judge's life. Yet, *in her way*, she was devoted to him, and, during his last illness, never spared herself in her efforts to alleviate his suffering. Judge, from first to last, was infinitely patient and considerate; he took her with him wherever he went when this was at all possible, and did his utmost to reconcile her to what she regarded as her unhappy fate. She cared nothing about Theosophy (though after his death she spoke differently), and Judge took pains to keep her from contact with its deeper aspects, for which, as he knew, she was totally unfitted. Fortunately, his closest friends in the Society went out of their way to be friendly to her, and in some cases she appreciated this and responded, making his life much easier and her own less full of complaint. It would be unfair to blame her: brought up in Brooklyn, as a strict Methodist, she married a man she thought she knew, to discover later, when the real Judge came to the fore, that she had married a total stranger.

The letters immediately following that last given were marked "Confidential", and contained personal instruction, both inner and outer, the latter in regard to the future of the Society, involving persons and their characteristics,—none of which can be published. In one of these letters Judge wrote: "Jowett might be told that while it is all right to stand behind the Branch [Nashville], he ought to let them get on their feet, even if they seem to see disaster: he can step in at last. If he coddles it too much, it won't be any good." It was Judge's aim always to make every Branch, every department of the Work, and every individual member, self-supporting, materially, morally and intellectually.

[Postmarked] AIKEN, S. C., December 19th, 1895.

Dear Boy,

Just got your last from Atlanta and Macon, and am rejoiced you are so near.

You ask me to reserve Christmas. If you knew how vast is the dullness, you would feel quite safe as to "reservations". There is nothing to do and no-

where to go, and you *can't* do anything with the day but get indigestion; and that I shall not attempt.

After the final success at New Orleans it seems rather a pity you did not stay longer. I shall be glad to learn from you how you got on as to contributions since last reported.

N. B. My object in this is to have you prevent any of the Macon members coming over here with you to see me, which they might do if they know I am here. Tell them I can see no one, and the trip would be waste of time. The little talking I do is reserved for you. And you do not expect any conversation. If they did come, I would not see them.

After your stay here, if you did not include Pittsburgh and Philadelphia, I want you to. Your friend Opperman [President of the Branch in Belgium] has, I hear, come over to live in Pittsburgh within the past few days. The people need attention, and one or two bubblings must be burst.

Entre nous: we leave here same time as you do, to go to Cincinnati, then to see [Dr.] Buchman, Fort Wayne, and then to New York. Climates are no good. Our routes are almost at right angles; so we will part here and you go by Seaboard.

Oh: try in Macon to buy me a small good oil whetstone for my penknife. A piece of white Arkansas stone is the thing. By "small", I mean not over 4 inches.

On your return to New York, Griscom wants you to stay with him till you find your own place. That place will be with me, as we are going to take a small house or a flat. So remember that you are thus bound. The charge for living made to you will help me keep the house, and we shall have the satisfaction of being together. You had best accept Griscom's invitation.

Good-bye. No more and we shall meet.

As ever,

4.

(To be continued)

Blessed is he that truly loves and seeketh not love in return. . . . Blessed is he that serves and desires not to be served. Blessed is he that doeth good unto others and seeketh not that others do good to him.—Brother Giles.

Remember that life is made up of loyalty: loyalty to your friends; loyalty to things beautiful and good; loyalty to the country in which you live; loyalty to your king; and above all, for this holds all other loyalties together, loyalty to God.—Queen Mary.

ON THE SCREEN OF TIME

THE recent Convention of the Society was still echoing in our hearts. The Recorder had expected this, and had brought with him, as we met informally in the shade of a giant oak-tree, a sheet of manuscript.

We were on a hill-top, dearly loved by some of us. Rising just within the confines of a great city, our hill looks down upon it, yet, though part of it, is not of it,—just as a light-ship is no part of the tumult of waters which beat against its walls.

Without preamble, except to say it was by Cavé, the Recorder read his manuscript:

"In the early hours, when dawn was breaking over the earth, a loud Voice cried: To-day, if ye would hear his voice, harden not your hearts! Then it paused, and then it cried again: To-day, if ye would hear his voice, harden not your hearts! And so again and again, at recurring intervals.

"The Voice was a Voice of reverberations; it was lifted high, yet it crept like subdued thunder across the surface of the ground. It was a Voice of joy and of appeal; it held out hope and opportunity; it was a Voice of longing, in anguish for its message to be heard. It was a Voice of warning, foretelling direful things to be, and in its undertones were despair and wailings, lest the day pass and the hardened heart refuse to yield,—wailings to prefigure the wailings when the hardened heart awakes too late. Lo, *this* is the acceptable time, it seemed to say; Lo, *this* is the day of salvation, when the Christ arises in glory to shine forth over the world, bringing his lightnings with him. Joy, joy to ye, it cried; woe, woe to ye, it cried,—as if the whole Lodge sent forth its messenger, burdened with the torrent of its cry, the torrent of love and yearning from the Heart of the Great Lodge itself, to the hardened, evil hearts of men."

"Thank you", somebody said; "that is a 'Fragment' of no mean order. Whether as prelude or postlude to the Convention—or both—its message meets my need exactly."

There was a younger member present, very anxious to learn, and, fortunately, with the courage to ask. "I should like to know", he said, "whether such things are just made up, as poetry is made up, or whether they are real." We laughed; but it was a very honest question, and the Philosopher met it accordingly.

"You will have to answer that for yourself", he said. "By testing all things, by holding fast to that which is true, you will acquire, little by little, the ability to *know;* that is, to discriminate between that which is real, and that which is either psychic counterfeit or legitimate imaginative writing. The psychic counterfeit has a false ring somewhere, if you listen closely; imaginative writing, which includes nearly all poetry, may, by its truth and beauty, do much to open for us the doorway to the real. The final test, as Judge said, must be the touchstone of one's own soul. What the Recorder has just read, strikes me as emi-

nently real; and you have the right, if you choose, to accept my judgment as a sort of working hypothesis until longer experience and study and constant 'testing' have given you the means to judge for yourself.

"Not *all* poetry is 'made up', however. A few poets—from long before the days of Isaiah—have been seers as well as poets. Some of our greatest music has been heard by those recording it, and heard as clearly as though played by a nearby orchestra. There is nothing extraordinary about that. The event which Cavé described was in no sense miraculous. The invisible world, so-called, is far more real than our world; its inhabitants vary widely in nature and character, some, infinitely wiser and greater, others, even less developed than we are. . . . Let me suggest an experiment: read the Bible again as if it were a record of real life, and try to believe that Science has not as yet changed the constitution of the universe, and that if an invisible world and its denizens existed five thousand years ago, it probably exists, in spite of Science, just as vividly, just as surely, to-day!"

The younger member, after protesting that he was not hypnotized by Science to the extent the Philosopher seemed to suppose—upon which the Philosopher eyed him doubtfully—said that he had been quite bewildered by a statement made at the Convention to the effect that wealth is an outer expression of spiritual worth: would somebody please explain it?

"The speaker who made that statement", the Philosopher replied, "should be here in a few minutes, and I shall leave it to him to explain himself. Meanwhile it would be well to remember that unless a speech be devoted to the consideration of a single topic, it is inevitable that much must be left unsaid, especially when it is the speaker's aim—as I suspect was the case in this instance—not to instruct, but to provoke thought, to challenge fixed ideas, to set hearts and minds in motion. Better be in a muddle and know that you are in a muddle, than rest content with a fallacy. Let me ask you: used you really to believe that by seeking first 'the kingdom of God and his righteousness', food and clothing and other necessaries would be 'added unto you'?"

"I am afraid", was the reply, "that I had not thought about it at all; I just assumed that I had to earn my living like other people."

The Philosopher was amused. "Yes", he said; "but some people try to earn a living, and can't. How did you explain that? . . . But here comes the culprit"—and he turned to the new arrival with a rather lurid picture of the younger member's bewilderment.

"I don't blame him in the least", said our friend; "I realized while I was talking that I had only skimmed the surface of a very big subject. For instance, I said nothing of the fact that the saints have often made themselves poor, deliberately, because they knew that the possession of wealth, even in a limited sense, involves an obligation, a duty, which is time-consuming, and because they knew also that money brings temptations from which poverty is free. In terms of discipleship, very few people can stand the test of wealth; the tests imposed by poverty are far easier. Not many people are likely to become 'attached', in the occult sense, to poverty!

"Neither did I say anything of the all-important truth that polar opposites meet, and that the Black Lodge, like the White, controls enormous wealth, though derived from a diametrically inverted source,—with the Black Lodge far more free than the White to use or to give wealth during Kali Yuga, for reasons often explained in our literature. . . . Perhaps the problem will prove less confusing by a slight change of terminology. Thus: spiritual *health* results in physical *health* (keep polar opposites in mind, here also); most chronic diseases are the outer expression (purgation) of wrong moral or mental states. Further than that, I suspect that infectious and acute diseases can affect us only when we are 'negative' to them. But these are general principles, and it is easy to see, not the exceptions to the rule, for there are none, but the many other factors which seem to produce exceptions. For instance, in the case of H.P.B., I doubt if she was ever free from physical pain from the beginning of her mission in 1875 to the day of her death. Apart from her own volcanic temperament, which certainly had something to do with it, such powerful forces played through her, in the production of phenomena and in other ways, that no physical or astral body of our time could possibly have stood up under them: they tore her to pieces. Many of the great saints suffered constantly from ill health. We must remember that 'health' on any plane depends upon balance, upon the harmonious interplay of differences (as in musical harmony); and that perfect spiritual balance is probably the last stage of human perfection,—though there again we must allow for the fact that almost perfect balance may be attained temporarily on a comparatively inferior plane of saintliness, and that this balance must be disturbed when, moving forward, the aspirant reaches toward discipleship, and then toward chêlaship.

"But perhaps I have said enough to suggest that the subject cannot be disposed of in five minutes, and that a student who should ever imagine that he had disposed of it completely, would prove himself very easily satisfied. We are on sure and solid ground so long as we stick to fundamental truths and changeless principles; the application of those principles to particular cases requires thorough knowledge of the factors involved in each case. We must surely know this from our experience when trying to apply a principle to some personal problem,—to deciding whether something is a duty or not".

The younger member said he would like to "think it over". Possibly he meant this; possibly he had already tucked the problem away among the mysteries he hoped to solve when he was dead: it is not often that people take much pains to "think things out". In any case, he turned to another and totally different subject.

"What you told us at Convention about that wretched creature in hell, who finally, in effect if not in form, cursed his mother,—has haunted me", he said. "Could you tell us more about him? How old is he now?"

"He must be over sixty. I spoke of him merely to illustrate the stage of degradation to which self-centredness may lead. His 'case'—any case—is of interest and value only in so far as it is typical, not singular. His is an extreme example of Egotism, which, unfortunately, is a widespread malady, all the symp-

toms of which we should study if we desire to keep ourselves free from it. One and all of these symptoms are so revolting that, once we see them for what they are, whether in ourselves or in others, I do not see how we can fail to recoil. For instance, the man of whom I spoke, if he were to write the history of his life, would begin it in some such way as this:

I would not treat a dog as life and my friends have treated me. From the beginning I was misunderstood. My parents had good intentions, doubtless; but they mismanaged me dreadfully. How clearly I can see it now! I tried, even as a child, to warn them; but they would not listen,—would not listen to their own child. They said I was a liar, and others, since then, have said the same thing; but what is the use of trying when the impossible is always asked of you? I was thwarted at every turn. At school the other boys would never let me win a game,—that is, if they could help it, for sometimes I did win (I always won when I was given a fair chance), but the other boys grudged me my victory. My teachers never appreciated me: they were hopeless fools. It almost seemed as if they did not like me. Brilliant as I was in many ways, who *could* have succeeded in my place, opposed and restricted on every side, distrusted, and made to do all sorts of things which I did not want to do. Over and over again I forgave my parents, and made a new start, not even reproaching them, except indirectly, for their shocking mistakes, which sometimes amounted to downright cruelty. What I have suffered! I am the victim of their blindness. Can you wonder that I have lost all faith in God? The only hope left to me is that someday I may appear before His judgment seat and prove how wrong they were. And not my parents only, for even to-day, with parents long since dead, there are those (relatives) who, because they support me, and because they claim to know my "weaknesses", dare to insist that I must live in one place rather than another! Their excuse is that they want to keep me out of temptation. But I will not be bullied, I will *not* be bullied! And I tell them so, though of course adding that I am very grateful for their good intentions. Everyone I tell about it is sorry for me. "Can you wonder", I say, "brought up as I was, tied hand and foot as I am?" And they say "No, indeed; No, *indeed*". It is only the people who ought to be the most sympathetic because they have known me longest, who fail to understand, who fail me in my need. Perhaps my mother in the other world already sees the error of her ways—sees that she is responsible for my condition—and suffers. In that case, I am sorry; but, after all, what is her suffering in comparison with mine? And, when all is said and done, she *is* responsible.

"You cannot stand any more, I hope: it was my purpose to give you rather more than you could stand. Now for my conclusion: all of us must die; death may be nearer than we think. As we die, we shall meet the Angel of Death; next we shall meet the Angel of Judgment, who, in a flash, will display before us every detail of our lives—every act, every thought, every motive—and will then, with eyes like lightning, demand of us: 'Who was to blame?' If we answer instantly, with uttermost conviction, from an overflowing heart, 'I, my Lord!' his eyes will soften, and he will lead us to the Lords of Compassion. But if we hesitate, if we think of this or that excuse, if we remember the real or supposed offences of others—words or deeds that 'drove us'—if, by the shadow of a hair, we try to evade entire responsibility for the least as for the worst that we did, then will that Angel say to us, quietly, evenly: 'You lie to your own soul; you are a coward; you are mean. You have robbed the Lords of Compassion of their right to be compassionate; by making excuses for yourself, you have robbed them of the right to make excuses for you. They would have covered you with the mantle of their peace, but you have chosen to cover yourself with shame. Go to the place where resentments and accusations and bitternesses,

and the whole loathsome swarm that self breeds,—live and flourish and increase until their own heat consumes them. Go to the place of fire. Go!' And there will be no appeal.

"The truth is that we shall have no choice when that Angel of Judgment confronts us: we shall say what we *are;* we shall echo in one true word, or in a thousand false words, the meditation of our life. I do not mean that to-day we are doomed by our past: far from it; for to-day, if we find any trace in us of resentment or grievance or self-justification or self-excuse, we can tear it up by the roots, and plant in its place a clear-cut, powerful sense of our own responsibility and folly, and of remorse that we could have been so low and so unmanly as to put the blame for any act or state of ours upon anyone or anything except ourselves."

"Are there no exceptions?" asked our Visitor. "Suppose we really are injured; suppose a burglar should enter our home and rob us of all we possess: should we not blame him?"

"The burglar, or the police? Much good would it do you in either case! Pursue the burglar, have him punished if you possibly can, for that is a duty you owe to society; but when it comes to blame, blame yourself,—for failure to protect your house against burglars; for failure to foresee the possibility, and to have provided for it by steel shutters, automatic alarms, and all other known means of protection. The idiot who blames the burglar, learns nothing, does nothing (except talk about his injury), and is very likely to be 'injured' again, perhaps by the same burglar. But I, of course, was speaking primarily of those personal 'injuries' which most people forget quite easily unless inflicted by friends. No need, I think, to expatiate on ordinary instances. Let me revert to the extreme case of the man in hell, as his behaviour illustrates all other cases. He had an older sister who talked to me rather freely because she was a member of the T. S., and in those days I travelled a good deal among the Branches. She told me that while her brother was living at home, her mother, whom she loved, and whose sense of maternal duty she deeply respected, would reproach the brother justly but forcibly when his behaviour had been particularly outrageous. Even at that time, the sister said, in his desire to justify himself, he had entrenched himself in the conviction that his mother was at least as much to blame as he was for anything he might do; so her reproaches naturally impressed him as unfair; he resented them bitterly. After a struggle with himself, however, and in order to demonstrate his own magnanimity, he would decide to forgive her, and would go so far as to express regret for hurting her feelings, accompanied by expressions of his affection and of his desire to do better. Up to a certain point, his mother felt that she must accept his assurances, although, as she was no fool, she knew quite well that her son was not only more pleased with himself for having 'forgiven' her than he was sorry for his wrongdoing, but that he was keeping a careful count in his mind, not of his sins, but of the many occasions, throughout the years, when he *had* 'forgiven' her, when he had decided, as it were, to give her another trial. His sister told me that the way in which this attitude oozed out of him in his manner to his mother—a

manner of kindly, considerate, forgiving condescension—was almost more than she could endure, and that she would have exploded often if it had not been for her mother's restraining influence. This was years before he wrote the appalling letter from which I quoted at the Convention. He was working up to it, however; in fact he had been working up to it all his life, resisting at every turn the heroic efforts of his mother to save him from himself (when he was ten, his father had died). All his life, as my suggested autobiography tries to show, he had seen himself as right and others wrong; he had blamed others rather than himself; he had stored up resentments and grievances; he had increasingly wallowed in self-pity. Up to a certain point, his love for his mother, even though condescending, was strong enough to keep him at home; but as his resentments accumulated and his egotism increased, inevitably his love grew less (his mother's fault, of course!), until finally, as he said, he 'could stand it no longer', and left,—going down hill like an avalanche as soon as he had thrown off such restraints as his mother had been able to impose. Gently born, gently reared, with all the advantages that loving care could give him, with no obstacle in his path except his own egregious vanity and egotism, to-day he is some kind of peddler, cursing his fate, cursing his luck, cursing his mother's friends who keep him from starvation, trying to injure them in every way he can, angrily calling on God to give him what he wants, and, above all, to avenge him. Was I wrong when I said he is in hell,—though still on earth? Sometimes I wonder: 'curses like chickens come home to roost'; he wished his old mother might die like a dog in a gutter. She did not; she died in her bed, lovingly cared for, full of faith and hope and charity. Will the fate he wished for her be his own? I trust not; I am so afraid that she would know of it. After all, she was his mother.

"Yet,—see how Nature works to bring good out of evil! It means more to me than to you, of course, because I knew that man and his family; but surely anyone can profit from such a warning, from so terrible an example of the leprosy of self."

Said the Philosopher: "The unadulterated specimen of egotism is the unadulterated specimen of cad; there is no difference; the terms are synonymous. I am glad you have rubbed it in. The seeing of these things is one of the greatest gifts Theosophy offers us. What a chance we have! 'Just to thy wish', as the *Gîta* says, 'the door of heaven is found open before thee, through this glorious unsought fight which only fortune's favoured soldiers may obtain'. That is Judge's translation, and it is easy to feel something of his own enthusiasm in the words. With what delight we should attack and pursue our enemy if we would but dwell more on the positive nature of selflessness. The beginner nearly always sees it in negative terms, and makes a mental picture of a mashed-out condition which is the opposite of the real; and this means that he identifies himself with the thing—the democratic Parliament of elementals—which exists within him, but from which he can separate himself instantly if he will move to the gallery instead of sitting on the floor. Some of the old writers were very wise. One of them told his pupils always to look at their temptations over

their left shoulder. Try it; it works! He must have had a sense of humour too. Another described all thoughts of self as 'insults of the Devil',—a splendid phrase, putting the matter just where it belongs, with the clearest possible perception of the true as against the illusory nature of the aspirant."

The younger member's mind was active. "Why was so little said about Germany at the Convention?" he asked. "I do not remember that Hitler's name was even mentioned."

"What need to emphasize the obvious?" countered the Historian. "Was there anyone at Convention, can there be any reader of the QUARTERLY, in doubt as to what is going on? Hitler realized, or was made to realize (possibly by Hindenburg), that he had gone too far: he had brought the whole world about his ears. So he 'soft-pedalled', declaring that Germany wants peace,—and Germany *does* want peace, *for the present:* she wants an opportunity to manœuvre herself into a better position for taking the aggressive; she is not quite ready, either nationally or internationally, for war. Blindness would have to be wilful, if there were failure to see that; only a politician with some personal axe to grind, could be equal to it,—though fanatics, of course, are perennially capable of anything.

"Meanwhile, for those not sufficiently informed, I should like to recommend a book; *Germany Puts the Clock Back*, by Edgar Ansel Mowrer, recently published by William Morrow. The author is an ardent democrat, which, as you know, I am far from being; but he is honest and fearless; has lived in Germany for years as correspondent of the Chicago *Daily News*, and describes clearly and convincingly the way in which Hitler acquired his present position as the embodiment of the German spirit. It is a most instructive book. I am not quoting him, but this is what it comes to: Germany is hysterical by nature; cultivated self-assertion has increased this tendency to such an extent that she has become irrational: she prides herself on 'thinking with her blood'. In a speech by Hitler on May Day of this year, *The New York Times* reported him as saying: 'All Germans must unite as never before to assert themselves . . . and every effort of the government must be devoted to raising German self-esteem.' With that as Germany's avowed aim, can any student of Theosophy doubt that she is being prepared again as a tool in the hands of the Black Lodge? A hideous fate, not only on moral grounds, but because *that* Lodge, as soon as its purposes have been served, throws its victims to the dogs to devour."

"Connected in my own mind with the Convention," one of the editors of the QUARTERLY now volunteered, "is an article on William Beckford, which is due to appear in our present (July) issue. I am sure it will interest many of our readers greatly. Some of them, without doubt, will wish to read more about him for themselves, and I should much like, if it were possible, to recommend a book. The trouble seems to be that his biographers, so far, have been entirely worldly, without the remotest conception of what we should speak of as the 'inner life', or even of religion as perhaps an important, if not dominant factor in controlling a man's activities. Of course, granting that Beckford was an occultist, one could not reasonably expect for him a better fate, since the lives of

occultists can be written only by their peers, or at least by reverent disciples. By far the better of the two existing biographies is by Lewis Melville—*The Life and Letters of William Beckford*—published in London in 1910. Mr. Melville has written a great many books on literary subjects, and deals with Beckford as a man of refinement and good feeling would, though the treatment, as I have said, is disappointingly superficial. His volume, by the way, is beautifully illustrated with reproductions of portraits. The other and more recent Life is by John W. Oliver, published in London in 1932. Dr. Oliver (D.Litt., Edinburgh) is a Scotchman, and there are two types of Scotchmen, as every student of history, or of Scott's or Barrie's novels, must realize: at one extreme we can think of Bonnie Prince Charlie at his best; at the other, of those Elders of the Kirk portrayed by Barrie in *The Little Minister*, who, if they saw a window-shade down on a weekday, instinctively inferred that the very worst must be going on behind it. Let that type of mind loose on the life of H.P.B., of Judge, or of any man great of soul, and it is easy to imagine the result; combine this with priggishness and a large measure of intellectual conceit, and the result, to put it mildly, is a general desire to throw the author and his book into the waste-basket: he is far worse than blind. Such books, however, do less harm than one might suppose, as they mislead only those whose minds are of the same order,—people who instinctively believe, and prefer to believe, the worst. Hence, when Mr. Oliver states in his Preface: 'I have done my best . . . to establish the truth about him [Beckford] and, at the same time, to deal justly and sympathetically with one whose posthumous reputation I have felt to be very largely in my hands',—I, for one, am quite prepared to accept the sincerity of his declaration, including the statement that he has done *his* best; but, instead of feeling with the author that his book is a finality, and that he has settled and determined Beckford's 'posthumous reputation,' I am cheerfully convinced that nothing so unpleasant has happened, and that enlightened studies will yet be made of a very great man."

"How I wish", exclaimed the Historian, "that modern biographers could be persuaded that it is bad taste and bad art to keep themselves in the centre of the stage, with the lime-light always on them! They are such impossible 'smarties'; they use their subject merely as an excuse for the display of what they take to be their own uncommon cleverness; they attitudinize; they wink at you, knowingly, slyly; they invite you to admire them, they *beg* you to admire them,—and always at the expense of the person they are supposed to be telling you about. Recently, wanting to know more about 'Chinese Gordon', I bought a book which had just appeared and which was highly recommended because its author had been the first to have access to Gordon's letters to his sister. I know nothing of the author except that his name is Wortham. It was all I could do to finish his 'fascinating study', as the English *Manchester Guardian* is said (on the book's 'jacket') to have called it: nothing but sneers at Gordon's faith; would-be witticisms at Gordon's expense,—the effort of a little man, writing about a big man, to keep on feeling superior. . . . There are exceptions, thank Heaven: *King Charles II*, by Arthur Bryant, published by Longmans, Green in 1931, was one of them. Again I know nothing about the author, except that he

wrote that book; but it is a *real* biography, well documented without display,—vivid, interesting, fair; the work of a scholar and a gentleman, who writes about Charles II, not about himself. Biographies used to be and ought to be such delightful as well as instructive reading. Egotism has ruined the art,—to revert to a previous subject."

"I am curious to know", remarked the Engineer at this stage, "whether the reports we have been reading of the banking inquiry at Washington are as irresistibly reminiscent to others, as they have been to me, of the accounts that came out of Russia of Soviet 'trials'.

"I cannot get used to it. Theoretically, I have long faced the fact that the America of my forefathers, and even of my own youth, has been utterly swept away; but what has taken its place is for ever filling me anew with surprise and shame. A banking inquiry does not seem the sort of undertaking that will be best furthered by the mob hysteria of a bull-fight—not if its alleged purpose be its real one. A Senatorial committee seeks information as to the working of the present banking laws, ostensibly for the purpose of enabling it to determine what, if any, new legislation is needed to improve financial conditions or to prevent injustice. In other words, it purports to be an *investigation*, for the guidance of a legislative committee. Actually, it is conducted like a sensational murder trial, the committee's counsel adopting the attitude of a prosecuting attorney, intent upon securing a conviction by fair means or foul, alleging guilt and then trying to prove it, attempting to put upon every circumstance a criminal interpretation. Even if it were a murder trial, I am old-fashioned enough to cling to the principle of our law—however departed from in our practice—that every man is entitled to be treated as innocent until there is proof of his guilt. He would at least have to be indicted before he was tried. Not so here. In these Congressional fishing expeditions, any man, who has ever had anything to do with the subject of the inquiry, may be made to turn over all his private records to a corps of examiners, who search them, not for their bearing upon some previously formulated charge, but for anything which (perhaps torn from its context and made to seem the very opposite of what it was) may serve as a savory tit-bit for a scandal-loving press. A trial in law is at least before a judge and jury, who have to pass upon the law and the facts; but here, instead of leaving it for his committee to decide, the committee's counsel turns it into 'a trial by newspaper'. This is something to which every member of the T. S. must object, not only on principle, but from bitter experience and knowledge of the Society's own history. None of us can ever forget the way in which the Movement and its leaders, Madame Blavatsky and Judge, were for ever being tried by the newspapers, which means, by people without the least understanding of what it was all about."

"I suspect", the Student commented, "that before this inquiry is finished some very questionable practices will be revealed, if not such as are definitely dishonest; for big business is like little business in that its character depends upon the character of the men who are running it, and the standards of a house like Morgan's are very different from those of some of the international Jews

in the banking business. Nevertheless it will be the newspapers and politicians of the country, quite as much as its bankers, who will be actually on trial in the proceedings at Washington, and so far, the ethics of the bankers positively shine in comparison with those of the press. As for the ethics of the politicians—well, with few exceptions, the less said, the better."

"Do not forget the public", added the Philosopher. "People just believe what they want to believe, and the desire to pull down those above them, and to find scapegoats for their own faults and misfortunes, undoubtedly accounts for much of it."

"I have been wondering", the Historian here said, "whether our friend the Recorder is going to try to use this conversation for the *Screen*, and, if so, what appearance it may bear a month or so hence when it comes to the QUARTERLY'S readers. With the aspect of events changing as rapidly as they are now doing, I do not envy any man the task of commenting on current topics for anything but the daily press. We have now repudiated the gold standard; next week we may have repudiated the Constitution,—if we did not do it last week, as some lawyers of my acquaintance believe. Happy thoughts follow each other with startling suddenness, and are translated into laws almost over night,—laws as some wit suggested, that should be annotated as 'dictated but not read'. Of course many other countries have gone off the gold standard as well as ourselves, notably England; but England's case was totally different, as her gold reserve had almost disappeared, while our stock is enormous; and England has been scrupulously careful to fulfil all external undertakings to which she has pledged her word. Most governments have assumed the right, at one time or another, to treat their own citizens in any way they chose,—down to the confiscation of all their property, as in Soviet Russia and Republican Spain; but with the additional exception of Germany, civilized nations have been rather punctilious in the observance of their obligations to foreigners. England, though she will not pay out gold to her own nationals, has paid it regularly to all foreign holders of her bonds, strictly complying with her promises. We have done nothing of the sort."

"How about the French default on her war debt to us?" asked a visitor.

"Why call it 'default'? France calls it a postponement, explicitly involved in the Lausanne agreement. Urged by all the Powers, and not least by the United States, to assent to the cessation of German payments, France accepted on condition that a corresponding modification be made in the schedule of her payments to us, and that if German payments to her were stopped, her payments to us must of necessity stop also until a new agreement could be reached. France has neither repudiated her word nor changed her attitude. It is we who have tried to foster the fiction that the two halves of an agreement have no connection with each other, and that the one half can be abrogated leaving the other unchanged. How honest France is, and what respect she has for her word, is shown rather dramatically in her provision for her municipal and government bond interest. On one issue, for example, an interest payment of $37.50 in gold was payable on each thousand dollar bond on June 1st, in New York. By the

President's edict, no one in New York is permitted to hold or pay out gold, so France might well have claimed that we had ourselves made the fulfilment of this promise of hers impossible, and contented herself with paying $37.50 in what is now our only legal currency. Instead of availing herself of any such excuse, she calculated the rate of exchange existing on June 1st between the French gold and American paper, and paid the holder of each coupon, not the $37.50 of American money as specified, but $44.40½. This is the exact opposite of what we have done. With a large part of the world's gold in our Treasury, we have refused to pay our bond interest either in gold or in its equivalent, so that every one of the foreign holders of our bonds has received just as much less from us on our bonds, as we have received more from France on hers. We have gone far beyond the repudiation of a single payment; we have repudiated the whole principle of payment, on no other ground than that it suits our convenience, and that 'there is nothing in the Constitution to compel' this country to fulfil any obligation if it does not wish to.

"It is a curious commentary upon our pleas for disarmament and international councils and agreements, that we should at the same time be doing what Germany did in invading Belgium,—demonstrating conclusively that agreements and treaties and promises between nations are of no more weight than between rogues, as soon as a short-sighted view of expediency, instead of right principle, governs."

"Before we disperse," the Ancient now asked, "may I add something to what was said at Convention, and again this afternoon, about egotism? The eldest son of the German Crown Prince, and the eldest son of the King of Spain, have both announced in their different ways, as their explanation for marrying away from their families: 'I want to be happy!' The Grand Duke Alexander, in his last book, shows quite clearly that he lived on the same principle—even when he and his wife were in exile, he chased another woman to and fro across Europe on the proceeds of his wife's jewels, as he relates. He was a man of over fifty; the others are boys: but everything has a beginning. What tragic blindness! To boys it seems so simple—'I want to be happy'—that it ought to account for anything, even to throwing overboard all their natural duties, all their Karmic responsibilities, all sense of gratitude and of loyalty to their parents. 'I want to be happy'; the motto of the lower nature. 'Duty' sounds forbidding, I suppose; yet, if they could know the happiness of not caring about happiness any more, what a new and better world they would discover. I speak of them because they are outstanding examples of an approach to life which must mean the end of civilization unless it is checked. It is the antithesis of any religion ever promulgated; it is moral and intellectual anarchy; and it is the duty of every member of the T. S. to understand why this is so, and to make himself a living illustration of what his own soul demands, convinced that happiness will take care of itself if he but keep his will and attention fixed on doing the thing that is right."

T.

T·S·ACTIVITIES

REPORT OF THE ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

Morning Session

The Annual Convention of The Theosophical Society was called to order at 64 Washington Mews, New York, at 10.30 a. m., on Saturday, April 29th, 1933, by Mr. Hargrove, Chairman of the Executive Committee, who served as Temporary Chairman of the Convention. A Committee on Credentials was appointed, consisting of Mr. H. B. Mitchell, Miss Perkins, and Mr. Kobbé, to confer and report at once.

Address of the Temporary Chairman

Mr. Hargrove: While the Committee is at work, it will be my great privilege to attempt to express the welcome of the Society to you, its delegates and members. It must always be a matter for thanksgiving and joy when we assemble at these Annual Conventions,—thanksgiving because we are granted another opportunity to meet together and to unite in mind and heart and will in the service of those ideals to which, severally, we have dedicated our lives. Necessarily we think not only of those who are visibly present, but of a long past. We think of Dr. Keightley, Mr. Johnston, Mr. Griscom, and behind them of Jasper Niemand, General Ludlow, Miss Hillard, of Judge, of H. P. B., and then, behind them, through the centuries, of those who have lived and died that the world may live. We think of the lives and deaths of some of the great Adepts, and, while remembering the universal symbology of what befell them, shall doubtless recognize also that in every case the symbolism must have been based upon fact: just as Christ was crucified, so Osiris was torn to pieces, the almost inevitable fate of anyone who brings light into the world.

There is no need to enumerate the many of whom we must think, and who, for love's sake, will give us all the support they can at our meetings here to-day,—present of course in heart and mind, and perhaps in a far more complete sense. All we can do is fervently to pray that, both as individuals and as a Society, "we may so order our lives after the ideals for which our brethren died, that we may be able to meet their gallant souls once more, humbly but un-

ashamed". . . . I understand that the Committee on Credentials has performed its function. The next procedure is to call for their report.

This Report having been submitted and accepted, and the Committee discharged with thanks, Mr. H. B. Mitchell, President of the New York Branch, was elected permanent Chairman of the Convention, with Miss Perkins and Miss J. Chickering as Secretary and Assistant Secretary respectively.

Address of the Permanent Chairman

The Chairman: As the Temporary Chairman has reminded us, we are met together in a very august assemblage, which is drawn not only from the present and the generations which we ourselves knew, but also from the very distant past, and from other lands as well as from our own. For in the activities of these Conventions, it is not we alone, nor even we chiefly, who are concerned. It is not we who initiated the Theosophical Movement, nor did we ourselves win the spiritual treasures it places in our hands. We are, truly, its beneficiaries; but primarily we are its trustees; and those for whom we are trustees, the long succession of those who laboured and sacrificed for the Movement, and from whom we received the trust that is now ours, must surely be as much concerned as we in what we shall do here to-day. On our one side stands the past; on our other the future, unborn but foreshadowed by the past, with needs to which the wisdom of the past must minister,—the Divine Wisdom, *Theou Sophia*, the tradition of which has been made known to us and its keys given us.

Our Conventions are meeting places of opposites: of the old and the new, of that which is common to us all and that which is most individual, of the world and that which is wholly other than the world. Here opposites, completing their course, converge. Here, between them, is struck a spark and a light. Here paradoxes are reconciled in the greater unity that lies beyond them. Here the "Ancient of Days", the Divine Wisdom which was before the beginning of time, eternal and unchanging in the heavens, meets the ever-changing present of a changing world. Here are the immortal and the mortal; those who have trusted us, their trust, and ourselves.

The old and the new: in their conjunction we may recognize a principle which is worthy of our careful thought. It is that the old, eternal in itself though it may be, can live among men only as it can draw to itself the ever-continuing devotion of the new. All the age-old sacrifice, the heroic self-giving on which our Movement has lived, can continue to bear fruit amongst us only as it finds those who will carry it on, kindling their hearts from the torch it kept aflame.

Usually we find it wise to open our meetings with a reminder of the fact that in our Society no member can commit others, but that each speaks for himself and is alone responsible for what he says. Yet it is equally true that what each says is none of his—or very little of his. It is individual, in that he chose it and put his own mark upon it, but it was drawn from a common storehouse. You will remember what Emerson said of the one mind common to all individual

men. That mind is open to us, and through many channels we have been given of it. From the mind of the Masters themselves, our predecessors brought us Theosophy. Through present-day channels, through our fellows in the Society, through our meetings and discussions, our reading and study, we constantly draw from that great source open to us all. We speak as we have learned, and therefore the vision of truth that each of us expresses here, is but the giving back, to the common mind, of what was drawn from the common mind. Yet as it is given back it is made individual, stamped with the individual's own hall-mark; for what each draws and gives is his own selection from the infinite reservoir, and each man is responsible for his selection.

The simile of the fisherman casting his net in the sea is very old. He puts out his net to catch what is there; but some spread a net of fine mesh, and some a coarse one. The great fish break through the one; the little fish pass through the other. Some put it in a tide rip; some where the water is still. Some sink it deep; some cast it on the surface. According to their net, and the way in which they use it, is what they draw from the sea. So it is with us. Each of us casts a net, fashioned of his understanding, attention and desire, into the common ocean of Theosophy, and we draw from it according to the nature of the net we use,—which means according to what we are and seek. Thus our selection is our own, and we are responsible for it; but that from which we select is open and common to us all.

We seek, therefore, to draw from the past for the service of the present and the future. More truly, we seek to draw from the Eternal, from what was in the past and must be in the future, though in itself it stand for ever beyond all the divisions of time. We would rise above such divisions and limitations if we could,—rise above ourselves; but we know that even though we do this, each of us must see from his own standpoint, and act from his own angle. Reality reveals itself differently to each different approach, and to every individual makes an individual response. As Krishna tells Arjuna in the *Gîta:* "In whatever way men approach Me, in that way I love them".

Consider this. Behind me on the wall hangs a picture. From whatever part of the room you are looking, if you see it at all, you see it as everyone else sees it. Now suppose that instead of looking at a picture, a second-hand representation of reality drawn on a flat surface, you were looking at reality itself—looking out, let us assume, upon a real landscape of trees and rocks and distant hills—you would not all see the same thing. Looking from different angles you would see different sides of a tree-trunk; a flower, hidden by a rock from one view-point would be visible from another. This is typical of the difference between all first-hand experience of reality, and its second-hand representations, between a vision that penetrates beneath the surface and one that is superficial. As soon as our view has depth as well as breadth and extension, as soon as we cease to be satisfied with the mere flat, surface appearance of things, we find that a new factor enters,—a property possessed by the real, but dependent upon us. Each of us then looks into a dimension of reality that is different according to his angle of approach. We see in perspective; and to the measure

that our view has depth, the importance of this characteristic increases, differentiating our view from others. So seeing, we see far more truly; but thereby perceive that we do not, and cannot, see all. We perceive that our own view needs to be supplemented, as it is only one of an infinite number of possible views, in each of which something is hidden which in another is revealed. Therefore we need to synthesize the views of our fellows with our own.

There is another consequence of this. The ability to see reality in perspective, enables us not only to see how our own view may be supplemented, but also how it may *not* be supplemented. It enables us to prove error as well as truth. If we look only to the surface, we have no means of judging what may lie beneath it. On the back of the picture hanging on the wall, there may be pasted another picture with no relation to what we see before us in the frame. If anyone told us that he had turned the picture round and seen what was on the back, and that it was thus and so, we should have no means of judging whether what he said was accurate. But there can be no such complete ignorance when we are looking deep into a real scene. Though the half of a tree-trunk be hidden from us, we can nevertheless be sure of certain characteristics of size and shape which it would reveal to those who approached it from the other side; and therefore if anyone who speaks to us has looked, not at reality, but at his own fancies and predilections, and attempts to substitute a description of these for a description of the scene before our eyes, we perceive where what he says does not apply. What we see shows us that he is in error; that he is actually looking in some other direction and at something else, since his is a description that the reality does not admit. Our emphasis upon the need for synthesis, therefore, does not blind us to the reality of error, nor to the need to exclude, as well as to include, if synthesis is to lead to truth. But even error can be of help to us, since, by contradiction it can sharpen our perceptions, and force us to the closer observation that confirms them. Therefore we may truly say that all views can be made of value to us, in the theosophic method, if we take them rightly.

But this by no means implies either that all views are true, or that they are of anything like equal value. When an artist would paint a landscape, he moves from point to point studying what he sees, until he finds a place from which the masses of light and shade harmonize, and instead of a mere aggregate of forms, a unity is composed. We must learn to do the same in drawing our pictures of life.

More than this, our point of view is also our base for action, and the fulcrum for our will. The effect of a force depends not only upon its intensity, but upon its direction and point of application. Difficulties which baffle us from one approach may yield easily from another. It is of importance, therefore, that we should not be content with our present views and standpoint. In every mass or body, however irregular, there is always a centre, where all might be hung, as on a pivot, and where a feather's weight, moved to right or left, might turn tons. We must, in all that confronts us, seek such a central point for vision and action, never content with that distant view of spiritual reality, where we perceive ourselves to be "far off" in the "region of unlikeness". We *shall* so

perceive ourselves, if we behold ourselves at all truly, and therefore every true perception should lead us to action, so that we may move from where we are to a more advantageous position. We can never rest in such truth as we have gained, nor be satisfied in such service as we now render. That is why we meet here to-day: to help one another to truer views, a more commanding view-point and a more effective base of action,—where we shall understand better the trust placed in our hands, and shall be able more effectively to fulfil it.

I have spoken of these things because it is well that they should be in our minds as an introduction to our deliberations, setting a key-note for our procedure. I want now to come to a theme of special moment to this Convention, held, as it is, when the whole world is facing the threatened breakdown of its economic structure, and civilization itself seems at stake. I shall use as a text a passage in *Light on the Path*, taken from the second of the long commentaries on the unnumbered rules.

"By your great enemy I mean yourself. If you have the power to face your own soul in the darkness and silence, you will have conquered the physical or animal self which dwells in sensation only. This statement, I fear, will appear involved, but in reality it is quite simple. Man, when he has reached his fruition, and civilization is at its height, stands between two fires. Could he but claim his great inheritance, the encumbrance of the mere animal life would fall away from him without difficulty. But he does not do this, and so the races of men flower and then droop, and die, and decay off the face of the earth, however splendid the bloom may have been. And it is left for the individual to make this great effort; to refuse to be terrified by his greater nature, to refuse to be drawn back by his lesser or more material self."

"However splendid the bloom may have been." There are some among us who have loved the bloom of our civilization, who have looked upon England and France, and the America that was, and loved them. The question which concerns us and the world to-day is just that indicated: Are they to droop, and die, and decay off the face of the earth, because they will not rise to their opportunity, because, between two fires, they make the wrong choice?

In our own memory, looking back through the fifty-eight years since the T. S. was founded, we see how rapidly civilization has flowered,—so rapid, so expansive the bloom, that there were many who thought mankind had never before reached such a point. Perhaps, remembering the traditions of Lemuria and Atlantis, we ourselves may not think that the heights of our civilization are so utterly unprecedented; but, if so, the fate of Lemuria and Atlantis gives us little comfort; and it is certain that in the records which the world accepts, we may search in vain for a period of more rapid growth in man's control of nature than that of our own life-time. Science, power, wealth, comfort, leisure; nature yielding its secrets and opening its stored treasures of coal and oil, of metals and rare earths; the harnessing of rivers to the development of electricity, made our familiar slave in all manner of daily uses; the opening of two continents, Africa, once the "dark continent", and our own West, with their virgin fields and forests; the invasion of the air and of all the unknown regions

of the earth from pole to pole; the sweeping away of the barriers of space and time,—all these have come about within the lifetime of our Society, from causes offering to the world opportunities whose very magnitude made them difficult to seize and understand. Looking back, we can see how much of this flowering was due to the scientist's genuine love of truth, but we can see too, what was scarcely realized at the time, how every gain was automatically turned to the uses of man's lower nature—just as the truths of Theosophy itself, so far as they were popularized, were perverted to their opposites,—brotherhood being made to minister to Socialism, and the powers of mind and will explored for the Christian-Science pursuit of health and wealth. Few realized what this meant, or how far the perversion of all things of the spirit had been pushed. We knew very well that it was not the spirit itself that men sought in those days of growing power. The True, the Good, the Beautiful, had rarely seemed man's dominant concern, and so it was scarcely noticed when that whole side of his nature was submerged more and more in his successful search for material prosperity and the gratification of his senses. It was not until the War broke out that most men realized how far from the Path the world had drifted,—not till that flaming fire came and awakened us, not till the German teaching that might was right broke out in act, and the War was on us in undisguised lust for power and dominion, in envy and cruelty and hate, in cold-blooded, calculated terrorism, worse than hate.

We know how sharp and dramatic the contrast was then made: on the one hand was military advantage, on the other the pledged word; and the pledged word became "a scrap of paper". That was the German side—as sharp and clear cut as that—and in the invasion of Belgium it was blazoned forth so all men could understand it. Equally dramatic and sharp was the French side: there was the German ultimatum that she desert her ally, and her unhesitating reply: Our word is given; we stand by it. And then, a few days later, England too, pledged to the neutrality of Belgium, came in to fulfil her word. There it was, the simple question, to be true or false. Perhaps the Good and the Beautiful were veiled; but on the face of Truth there was no veil at all, and over against it, all disguise abandoned, was the assertion of brute power, mad for material gain. The World War was fought on just that issue, and with it, all over the world, reaching at last even to this country, there was the resurrection of spiritual will, casting off comfort and self-interest, and choosing to follow the True, even though it should bring them death. It did bring death to millions. The outer world was drained of its best; but the armies of the Spirit were reinforced by millions of recruits. Some day that army will come back—the army of the dead, of those who chose aright. How trivial seems the phrase-making that would have us think they fought to make the world safe for "democracy", for votes and Tammany politicians! They laid down their lives for truth, for honour, for the pledged word, for their homes and their country and their sense of right,—to determine whether the life of the spirit was to live among men, or to give way to falsity and the power of the brute.

Our world is now the poorer for their loss,—until we learn to listen to them in

that other, inner world, from which our inspiration comes; and though the War was fought, it was not won. In the end there was compromise. There was the opportunity to gain what seemed safety, and the Armistice was declared. In the reaction which followed from this war-weariness and fatal compromise, the nations reacted to materialism again, to pacifism and self-seeking. Having fought for spiritual values, they now deemed they had a "right" to material reward. There was great talk of "rights", and less and less of duties, not even the duty to be men. A mother "did not raise her boy to be a soldier". There was the dole, and willingness to live upon the dole. Where there was prosperity, as there was in this country, it was used for the indulgence of the propensities of the lower nature which the War had compelled men to discipline and restrain,—for extravagance and vanity and self-aggrandizement, for sensation, and pleasure and unrestraint, for the indulgence of "the mere animal life". We have all seen it. The old morality, the old religion, were thrown away. So we were brought face to face with what *Light on the Path* has told us,—the flowering of a civilization, and the turning away of the nations from the supreme opportunity that was theirs. Why is the world in this depression? Because it has turned from its faith—from the faith by which alone it draws, or can draw, the power to live. There is no need to seek for any other reason.

How does this touch our duty? Why should we speak of it in the Convention of The Theosophical Society? And what is the profound characteristic of reality that is illustrated by the collapse we see on every side? It may be that the races of men will rise from this collapse. We have no knowledge that doom has been pronounced; and perhaps, whether it is or is not to be pronounced may depend upon us, few though we be. It surely must depend upon whether, within the world, there can be found enough of those who will respond to the opportunity that our time brings. Surely we, who have been taught in what that opportunity consists, should be among the number; surely it must be for us, at least as individuals and members of The Theosophical Society, to "make this great effort", to refuse to be terrified by the greater nature, to refuse to be drawn back by the lesser.

But why are these things so? Why does life wither when men turn from the spirit? Why do they lose all power when they lose their faith? Why do civilizations fail? Here we return to familiar ground, and to questions which we have constantly discussed. Whether we look within ourselves, or out upon the world around us, we see the two-fold nature of man's being. On the one hand, there is the animal self; on the other, the spirit. We have lived with the animal self for so long that we have come to think its world of shadows and reflections real. We are like the men of Plato's parable, whose only knowledge of other beings was their shadows, cast by a fire upon the walls of a cave. They had never turned to look upon reality itself, and when they were turned about they could not at first see it, dazzled by the sunlight, so that it remained almost meaningless to them until they could readjust their vision to the long unused light. So we, coming out of the shadows and darkness of material life, still

think of them as the real, and find them more vivid to our weak sight than the light and substance of reality itself. Thus the animal self, the little, separate creature of time and change, appears to us very real, very full of vitality and energy; and on the other hand, the spirit—the True, the Good, the Beautiful—seems very remote and abstract. It seems natural to identify oneself with the animal; hard to claim the spirit as one's very self. Rubbing our dim eyes, and looking first at one and then at the other, what seems strangest of all is that these two should be in any way related. How can hunger and thirst, struggle and passion, life and death, or any other of the qualities and activities of the animal self, be related with, or of concern to, the serene, immortal shining of Truth and Holiness and Beauty? The very words we must use to describe the one seem meaningless in connection with the other.

We know how they came together. We have been taught the dual stream of evolution; how, for humanity, the *chhaya* was given by the Lunar Pitris and the fire by the Solar Pitris,—and, completing it all for the individual, the bridging of the gap by the incarnation of the Masters, by the return from the further shore of those who had attained to the spirit, to the True, the Good, the Beautiful, and who came back embodying it, no longer as something remote and foreign to us, but as concrete and living, brought right to our side. We think of the lives of Dionysus, Orpheus, Osiris, Christ, acting out the eternal drama of the Mysteries, and we know that what they show forth is true. They are themselves the way, the truth, the life. All that we know of the spirit we know through those who have incarnated it for us. We know justice because men have lived and judged justly. We know of heroism by those who have in their own person been heroic. Once we have been shown these things in the flesh, we can thereafter see them for ourselves, immortal in the heavens; but we may doubt whether our eyes could ever have followed them there, had they not been brought down first to touch our hearts. Which one of us could have invented or discovered Theosophy for himself? All our knowledge of the things of our immortality, all that we have of *Theou Sophia*, the Wisdom of the Divine, we owe to that long line of those of whom Mr. Hargrove asked us to think, who brought it to us from the great Lodge of Masters, whose law of life it is. Placed now in our hands, we have become its custodians in the world, its trustees for the needs of the world.

We now face a very personal application of the principle of which I spoke at first. Though Theosophy be one with the Platonic Trinity, though it be eternal in the heavens, yet it can live among us only as it can command our ceaseless devotion, only as it can arouse the love of mankind to-day. Unless that love hold it here, it must return whence it came, breaking the link between the modern races of men and their "divine part".

Let us look at this more closely. There is an age-old simile for the relation of the spirit to man, which was recently described to us as it was pictured in the time of Akhnaton. There was the round disk of the sun, from which emanated rays reaching down to the earth and terminating in hands, bearing gifts—notably the gift of the Ankh, the symbol of life. It is a very perfect symbol.

The rays terminating in hands are, so far as I know, purely Egyptian; but the symbol of the sun itself has been used for divinity as far back as history enables us to see. Whence comes this life which we so naïvely think of as existing spontaneously in the animal nature, as those men of Plato's thought of reality as existing in its shadows? Science will not tell the origin of life—it does not know; but it will tell us that without what the sun's rays bring, life would perish from the earth. It will tell us that all life is so supported, all energy so drawn; and though we should, perhaps, only subscribe to such a statement if the symbol and what it symbolizes be regarded as one, the physical sun considered but the material veil of the spiritual from which all things come, yet we know that were the central sources to fail, all life would fail, and a frozen universe would fall to powder. There is no vitality in the separate animal nature. There is only the power to respond to the source of vitality. This is as true of spiritual vitality as of physical: only as we hold fast to the spiritual centre can we live. So the Christ, speaking as the Logos, taught his disciples: "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me."

The gift of life, the gift of the divine flame: the spark is given with our vision of the spirit; but it must be tended and fed with fuel, until it grows into a consuming fire. That we must do. If we quench the spark, shutting it off from its source, it must die. It is not enough that warmth and light and electricity and all the vital energies of the sun's rays should fall upon the seed. The seed must respond. And man's response to the spirit is love. Life is something that must for ever transcend itself in love. That is its nature. It is for ever reaching out beyond the little organism in which it is embodied, to the greater Self to which it owes its all. "Unveil, O Thou who givest sustenance to the universe, from whom all proceed, to whom all must return, that face of the true Sun, now hidden by a vase of golden light, that we may see the Truth, and do our whole duty, on our journey to Thy sacred seat."

The ancient hymns all tell us that life, if it is to live, must be for ever reaching out beyond itself, for ever returning to the source from whence it came. It is stultified if it be cramped within itself. To live for itself is to die. That is what we see in the world to-day,—the effort to live for self, which is death.

So again *Light on the Path* shows us where our own and the world's salvation lies. It is to leap at once from the old standpoint to the new, to become at once an intrinsic part of the divine power—the power of loving and giving—as we have been an intrinsic part of the intellectual power. It is a leap, a turning of oneself about; and it is nothing more mysterious or difficult than to love that which in its very nature is loveliness itself: the True, the Good, the Beautiful, and the great Lodge of Masters who embody and reveal that Trinity of Spirit. The one question that transcends all others for us to-day is this: Are we able to love the lovely, are we able genuinely to give ourselves to the service of the Spirit? Upon that question rests the continuance of The Theosophical Society and, indeed, the salvation of the world. It is as simple as that. Can we do it?

There are a thousand corollaries that spring from such a view of the relation

of man to the divine. When a man sets forth as an emigrant for a new country, as in our own time so many have done, the old ways, the old world, have to be surrendered; and the surrender has to be complete. No compromise is possible. One cannot go aboard ship and set sail for the new, and at the same time remain behind in the old. One cannot adopt half measures; it must be all or nothing. It is the same with us, if we would leave the old order for the new. Our first step must be one of renunciation, though it be but the giving up of the shadow for the substance, the mortal for the immortal; and the renunciation must be complete. Once we have embarked on this adventure, our thoughts and hopes must be centred on what lies ahead, not on what we leave behind. Our renunciation must be complete in the sense that it is *final;* having been made, it should no longer occupy our minds. To look back is to meet the fate of Lot's wife, to become paralysed and bitter, measuring life by what it has lost, rather than by what it may gain. Where have the seers and the prophets not warned us of this? Yes, and the poets too.

> And as the path of duty is made plain,
> May grace be given that I may walk therein,
> Not like the hireling for his selfish gain,
> With backward glances and reluctant tread,
> Making a merit of his coward dread,—
> But cheerful, in the light around me thrown,
> Walking as one to pleasant service led;
> Doing God's will as if it were my own,
> Yet trusting not in mine, but in his strength alone.

Can we not command that spirit of our forefathers,—for how else was this or any other country ever won? The spirit of all real adventurers; the spirit that is not niggardly, that does not go back to count and recount the cost, and to weep again and again over its sacrifices; but which presses on, "breast forward", with high courage and hope, never doubting clouds will break, holding "we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better". Can we not command the power really to love? really to serve? really to live? "O Lord . . . keep us in thy mercy from lip service and empty forms, from having a name that we live, but being dead."

There is a point of honour here which concerns us intimately. Most of us are familiar with the writings of Evelyn Underhill, and many of us are very gratefully recognizant of a debt to them that has deepened year by year. In one of her books, for the moment I have forgotten which, and quote only from memory, there is a barbed passage using our name even though it be not directed to us, which we must be very sure we never justify. She knows and judges of our Movement only as it is travestied in Mrs. Besant's Society; but, writing of the spiritual life and the supreme need to make it real, she speaks of Theosophy, which, she says, "like a platter of well tinned asparagus, is only pretending to be alive". We shall be well advised to look deeply into our own hearts and actions, to be certain there is nothing that can justify such a reproach.

Before I close, there is one thing more upon which I would speak. The word

spirit is used so loosely, often for something so sentimental, and with such connotations of effeminacy, that I wish to make sure no one can think it is thus that we use the word here. There is no trying to define it; but there is at least one hallmark that it possesses. As we look at our desires and activities, we see that they fall into two classes: the one seeks a good that is dependent for its value upon us, the other a good that is valuable in and of itself,—that would be valuable were we to cease to be. It is in the latter class that every spiritual activity is found,—in the furtherance of values that wholly transcend the self of the actor. Therefore it is that the ordering of a room, the making of a garden, the picking up of a blown paper, may all be religious and spiritual activities. Let us use this test when we talk about the spiritual life. It is not spiritual if it be not in the service of something other and greater than self—if it do not lead to the transcendence of self.

Thus we come back to our central question: can we love the lovely? Can we love God and the spirit and works of God? Can we love Theosophy, and the great Lodge, and the Masters through whom it has been made known to us? Can we love them and their cause? Can we seek them and not ourselves; and leap clear from the old standpoint in self to the new dependence upon them, and self-transcendence in their service? These are the questions of life and death, for the world, for our Society, for ourselves: "Lest it turn to my condemnation, the word heard and not fulfilled, known and not loved, believed and not observed."

Madame Blavatsky, Judge, our predecessors, succeeded because they succeeded in finding and kindling hearts that could respond to their teaching, catch fire from the truth they brought, love its loveliness, serve its goodness. Because of this, our Movement has continued to the present day, surviving the turn of the cycle, and developing chêlaship, which we too must develop and which is now our goal. If we are to fulfil our trust, as our predecessors did theirs, it must be done by the same means. If the Movement is to continue, it must continue to develop chêlaship; which begins in the ability to give oneself wholeheartedly to the service of the Lodge. If we are to succeed in the trust that is ours and the purpose for which we meet here to-day, we must learn to love, and so flame with that love that we may kindle it in the hearts of others.

The Chairman then called for the report of the Secretary T. S.

Report of the Secretary T. S. for the Year Ending April 29th, 1933

Once again, I have the honour to submit a report on certain phases of the Society's activities, but their full significance does not appear in this record, for I know of no way to portray the force, steadily working through the T. S., which gives them substance and meaning.

Branch Activities

The annual reports are of unusual interest. They bring to mind the declaration of science that certain lands, now separated by wide stretches of ocean,

must once have been united because identical forms of life appear upon them,—for the reports disclose a strong inner bond which produces a characteristic attitude, method, conviction and aspiration among Branches, widely separated, that plan their own activities and know little of what others are doing.

The Arvika Branch, in Sweden, surmounts obstacles presented by a scattered membership, being aided by the activity of distant members, among whom is mentioned the widow of their founder, whose eighty-one years do not prevent her participation, and another eager worker whose letters are said to carry the enthusiasm of a soul on fire for the success of the Movement. The Oslo Branch has held many well attended meetings; has welcomed as a Branch member the son of their deceased and greatly beloved founder, Col. Knoff; has lost a staunch comrade, Mr. Georg Simonsen, of whom the Secretary writes, "We had hoped to have him amongst us for a long time, and his departure is a heavy loss; but we feel his spirit with us in our work and shall always revere his memory". The Aussig Branch has studied Mr. Griscom's "Letters to Students"; QUARTERLY articles published during the Great War; Reports of Conventions, etc. Their report refers to a welcome opportunity to assist some younger members in Germany, and to their conclusions about the inner cause of the failure in understanding, which led many German members to side against the Movement at the outbreak of the War. Of their objective, they write: "As our individual Karma is interwoven with that of our nation (Germany), we have to analyze our past, disentangle the right from the wrong and extirpate what should be destroyed; so, likewise, we are obliged to examine the past of our nation, to see the causes of its present moral depravity. We are now living in a terrible time, in which the German spirit is raging even more freely than in the year 1914—reminding us of Mr. Griscom's article, 'War Seen from Within'. The forces of envy, malice, ambition, greed and lust are stronger, and licentiousness more unchecked than before the War. We think the coming Convention will be a very important one; yes, a crucial Lodge meeting. May the Masters of Wisdom find us ready."

Occasional joint-meetings are held by four of the English Branches; at the last one, Whitley Bay Branch was host, and a paper on the "Individual Outlook" led to helpful discussion. This Branch has resumed its study of *The Secret Doctrine*. Gateshead Branch greatly enjoys its meetings, and is laying a foundation by reading the *Abridgment of the Secret Doctrine*. The Newcastle Branch meetings have one objective, "encouragement towards and embodiment of discipleship". Mr. Johnston's "Religion of the Will" is now being studied. This Branch has a number of corresponding members, including a few in London who meet regularly and are working in unobtrusive ways. Like most Branches, they hold a special meeting on Convention day, and gratefully celebrated, last year, the tenth anniversary of the step by which, in 1922, the English Branches made closer connection with the Society as a whole, and came, as they now see, "nearer to the heart of the Movement". The Norfolk Branch has been studying *The Crest Jewel of Wisdom:* for its correspondence meetings, each member contributes every month written discussion of a stated section, with questions to which others make reply. The Branch Secretary, Mrs. Graves, writes: "We realize

more, each year, that it is not numbers which count, but the courage, the fidelity, the unswerving loyalty of the Branch as a whole and of each individual member in it." The ideal of the Branch in South Shields is that "its members shall become living examples of our philosophy", and thus make Theosophy understood and respected in their community. All European Branches report having donated to some Allied Relief work the equivalent of the sum which, before the War, they paid to Headquarters for dues,—and an American member has repeated a special contribution to the general T. S. funds which more than covers the amount those dues formerly brought into the treasury.

The Venezuela Branch has maintained the full measure of its many activities; translations of material from the QUARTERLY and from other theosophic literature, with valuable original articles, appear in *El Teosofo*, their magazine which carries the message of the Movement into the Spanish-speaking world. Appreciative comment by members-at-large indicates that this Branch has fixed a standard for the conduct of daily life, requiring from its members certain indications of serious devotion. The Toronto Branch reports sustained interest. "There are two main features", Mr. Harris writes; "first, our studies are with the object of gaining light on the meaning of life and how to live it; second, everyone takes part. Some of us have a memory of early days when the meetings were larger but the talking done by one or two only—which was more likely to lead to belief in what others thought than to faith based on one's own intuition and experience."

The Branch in Los Angeles has determined, Mr. Box writes, that the financial depression, in which its members have been deeply involved, shall be kept on the surface of things, where it belongs, and shall not be allowed to affect their inner attitude or outlook. Their study has been devoted to the introduction of Mr. Charles Johnston's *The Great Upanishads*, and articles from the QUARTERLY which treat of both inner and outer life,—for which material they wish heartily to thank the editors and contributors. The Denver Branch meetings have covered a wide range of subjects, including the theosophic study of St. Paul's Epistles. Recent members express gratitude for the broadening outlook on life brought by Theosophy. The Cincinnati Branch work, of which we shall hope to hear from its delegate, has been carried on with steady confidence. The Middletown Branch is standing its ground, courageously, in the face of adverse conditions. Representatives of the Branch in Providence will tell us of their year's good work.

Practically every Branch uses in its meetings the Reports of the New York Branch, and writes of their value in such terms as these: "Generally it is very marked how our thoughts and discussions have been running along lines similar to those of the reports, which amplify ours, giving clearer and broader meaning. All our members wish me to convey their sincere thanks for the help and information received." "We read and discuss the reports to get their full value, and to become imbued with the same spirit; they bring a feeling of nearness to Headquarters." "The reports have provided material both enjoyable and leading to much discussion." "They are precious; we thank all who make them possible."

The reports are prepared, from stenographic notes, by a member whose discriminating skill compacts the record of a whole meeting into a few pages.

Headquarters' Activities

The Theosophical Quarterly

There has been very general approval of the action taken by the 1932 Convention, in charging two dollars a year for the magazine—on the ground that it is not "sound business or sound morals or sound Theosophy" to sell anything for one-half of what it costs. The plan was of course understood by members present at Convention, and they proceeded to carry it out; others, both in Europe and America, took action as soon as they learned of the decision; and provision was made, as the Convention had directed, for members financially unable to pay for a subscription—when they made this fact known. Non-member subscribers heartily approved the new rate, a typical comment being, "It was a wonder to me that you had not raised the price previously—I am glad to pay the increase". In order to simplify the distribution of the Quarterly during the Society's new year, which begins May 1st, it is suggested that Branches and members-at-large notify Headquarters, promptly, whether or not they can meet the subscription price in the coming year. If not, suitable provision will at once be made; and if those whose circumstances make payment impossible would enclose a few postage stamps in their letter, they need not consider themselves in default.

From members, subscribers and library readers there have come expressions of heartfelt gratitude for help drawn from the magazine—for light upon the meaning of the present world-wide turmoil, and how to meet it. Here are typical tributes: "The Quarterly seems to me to be the great spiritual nourisher of its readers. Each issue teaches a distinct lesson which is made clear from different aspects in the various articles,—'Fragments' giving the keynote and the 'Screen' summing it all up. There can be no words to express one's gratitude for this high gift." "The Quarterly is wonderful, its articles are for all time and can be read over and over again with fresh interest; however old the matter is, it is never old."

The Book Department

This year our orders have reflected financial conditions; most people instead of writing for a number of books at one time have confined their orders to a single copy. There is sustained demand for the books translated and written by Mr. Charles Johnston—they appear to be finding their way into the libraries. In the 1932 Report, it was proposed that members who needed our books for study should order them, sending whatever sum they could afford, if not the full price,—the balance to be paid from a special fund in operation in the Secretary's office. I regret to say that this offer has not been taken literally, as it was meant to be.

Secretary's Office

It is a satisfaction to record that the work of this office has been carried

on with the aid of members who volunteered to replace the paid assistant, whose salary had been met, for a number of years, by a very generous member. All of us must feel deeply indebted to those who give their time and energy, for our benefit, in this way.

Little is ever said in our organization of a "high command", no one steps forward to take the salute—all are recognized as fellow students and combatants. But facts are facts, and the success of the work demonstrates a high quality of leadership; all of us know something of what we owe to the older members. Their understanding, sure initiative and restraining guidance hold the work true to the great current of the Movement; they check futile efforts that would only produce trouble—leaving each of us free to offer his very best, in service. Their experience and insight are also available for the assistance of anyone who knows his need, can make it intelligible, and is sufficiently in earnest to use, experimentally, any comment that might be given. There is, therefore, much indebtedness to be acknowledged. In conclusion, I should like to tell you, quite simply, how close to my heart is the work you have entrusted to me; it carries great privileges in the responsiveness of our members and in the connection with our leaders;—I am deeply grateful for such opportunities.

Respectfully submitted,
ISABEL E. PERKINS.
Secretary, The Theosophical Society.

After this report had been accepted, with the unanimous thanks of the Convention to the Secretary, the Assistant Secretary, and to all those who help them in their work, the Chairman appointed three committees as follows:

Committee on Nominations: Dr. Clark (Chairman), Dr. Stedman, Mr. LaDow.

Committee on Letters of Greeting: Mr. J. F. B. Mitchell (Chairman), Mr. Forbes, Mrs. Regan.

Committee on Resolutions: Mr. Hargrove (Chairman), Dr. Torrey, Dr. Hohnstedt.

Mr. H. B. Mitchell, as Treasurer T. S., next submitted his annual report, to April 29th, 1933, showing a net balance of $322.91. Mr. Mitchell pointed out that this satisfactory condition was due in large measure to the receipt of a legacy of $500.00 under the will of Mrs. Lucretia A. White.

The Chairman then called for the report of the Executive Committee.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

MR. HARGROVE: *Mr. Chairman and Fellow Members*, there is comparatively little to report so far as the outer activities of the Society are concerned. You have already heard, from the Secretary, something of the nature of those activities in various Branches and among members-at-large. I think that many of our members feel that they have been going through a period of storm and stress, and that they have been doing their best to carry out Mr. Judge's injunction, on one occasion, to sit still in the midst of all that may be said, inclining only to their duty. It may be helpful, however, if we devote a few moments to

a consideration of the nature and cause of the storm from which our members in general (and really without exception) have been suffering. It is usually referred to as *the* depression, as if there were only one, or had been only one.

I am afraid its consideration will carry us rather far afield, however, because —well, you will see at once why it does—for I am going to begin with the descent of spirit into matter. If we think of the descent of spirit into matter as a background for our thought, we should also think of a symbol, and that is of an old-fashioned hour-glass—an inverted triangle at the top, coming down to a point, then widening out into a similar but upright triangle.

As spirit descended into matter, we are told that it first struck, as it were, what became the mineral kingdom, represented by the base line of the lower triangle; and that then spirit was widely diffused. Next it reacted through the vegetable and through the animal kingdoms, until the elementary human kingdom was reached; then began the process of the development of the personality as a preliminary to the ultimate development of true self-consciousness and individuality. In that hour-glass symbol, the point at which the upper triangle touches the lower is the point corresponding to the place at which personality is developed—a critical point, because consciousness, at first diffused so widely and without centre in the mineral kingdom, and then gradually attaining centralized or personal consciousness in the human kingdom, at that stage ought to turn upward, and reach back to its source. Personality must be surrendered if individuality is to be attained. Spirit is reflected in matter,—diffusely reflected at first; then the focus becomes smaller and smaller, more and more concentrated, until almost in a pinhead the whole potentiality is reflected—*upside down*. There is the critical point: the narrowing down into the personality; and then what ought to happen, the reverse process,—the broadening out toward individuality, back to its source plus the attainment of self-consciousness. Unfortunately, it often takes a long time for the personality to respond to that pull upwards, to respond to the attraction of the Master at the head of the individual's ray. Too often, the personality sticks, falls in love with itself, sees itself as more attractive than the attraction of the Master at the head of its ray, becomes more and more concentrated on self.

We do not always realize the extent to which self-centredness can go; and because everyone of us is in danger at that point, and because the danger sounds remote and theoretical, I am going to give you an illustration of the condition to which it may lead. Years ago, in one of the smaller towns of this country, I knew an old lady, of the old school, a devoted mother. She had a son who lived some distance from her. He was in the habit of asking this and asking that of his mother, always wanting something for himself, and always adopting the attitude that it was she who was selfish and self-centred when, as frequently happened, it was impossible for her to comply with his wishes. In this way he built up a mountain of grievances against her. Finally that son made a request which the old mother, who was ill, could not and would not grant: she knew it would not be right; so the son wrote a letter in which he said to his old, sick mother: "I hope you will die like a dog in a ditch." I have thought of that ever since as

the quintessence of egotism, of self-pity carried so far as to be insane. He had reduced himself to a pin-point, with indifference to all things except as they affected himself. Bad and horrible as it was, we should not confuse such a state with that of the "black magician", who, instead of "sticking" and *disintegrating* at the critical point of turn, extends his consciousness, and especially his will, down to the lower base, corresponding at the pole of evil to the high attainment of those who, by sacrificing the personal self without reserve, rise to universal wisdom, love and power.

In the earlier stages of self-surrender, family life provides the best opportunity and training, for it almost compels some degree of consideration for others and therefore of personal sacrifice. That the larger the family, the greater the opportunity, is, I suggest, not only logical but manifest,—which may remind us once more that the purposes of unhindered Nature, until a soul enters the path of discipleship, are always beneficent and spiritual. Similar but further opportunity for self-surrender is provided at every stage of growth, for without effective co-operation between its members, no school team, no business organization, no army, could be successful or endure. In all these cases, however, co-operation is in some sense compulsory, if only for reasons of self-preservation. Co-operation which is entirely voluntary, and from which all elements of compulsion have been eliminated, is not only far more difficult, but impossible until, first, personality has been fully attained, and, second, has to a considerable extent been surrendered,—for, clearly, it cannot be surrendered until it has been attained. Those of you who are members of a Branch of the T. S., or who have worked closely with others in any voluntary association, must know how difficult co-operation sometimes is. The egotist always, when his will is crossed, accuses his associates of selfishness, blindness, failure.

Please note, at this point, that co-operation is a means, not an end, and that it is as wrong in some cases as it is right in others. It may be your duty as member of a Branch, for instance, steadfastly to refuse to co-operate if you think the end proposed is unwise,—for you are bound in honour to consider impersonally the best interests of your Branch as such, setting aside your personal inclinations, friendships and prejudices. Such refusal to co-operate ought to cost more, and thus provide better training in self-surrender, than when our need is merely to suppress our native self-assertiveness.

I am moving toward a consideration of Internationalism, or of co-operation between nations, and must therefore touch on the evident limits to co-operation between families, not only because the family is the true unit of national existence, but because the analogy between persons and nations is complicated, while that between nations and families—both of them obvious congeries—is simple. It should be evident, then, that it is the fundamental duty of the head of a family, who acts and speaks for it, to consider its welfare not only before he considers himself, but before he considers his far less direct responsibility for the well-being of other families. Thus, he has no right to deprive his children of the necessaries of life in order to gratify his desire to help children outside his family circle, and he has no right to co-operate with other families unless

it be for the benefit of his own. He will co-operate gladly, by paying taxes, in the maintenance of a Police Department, should he happen to live in a civilized community, for he knows that to secure his family against aggression is at least as important as providing them with food, and of infinitely greater importance than providing them with luxuries, amusement or leisure. Co-operation of this kind will be very difficult, because he will quickly find that the purpose of many "co-operating" families is, not to maintain an efficient body of police, but to provide jobs for relatives and friends, as police, at his expense, and perhaps even, by this means, to cover and protect their own nefarious schemes. He will learn, in brief, that while he may be prepared to co-operate truly, others are not, for they are still incapable of seeing or doing anything except in terms of their own exclusive advantage, and that, difficult as it may be to keep his own home in order, it must remain impossible for him to control the unbridled self-hood of some neighbouring homes. Finally he will discover that even in a community supposed to be civilized, the peace, well-being, and, in the last analysis, the moral and physical security of his family, will hinge upon the extent of its self-dependence, and that co-operation with other families, though in some ways necessary, will always increase, not solve, his difficulties.

From families we come to nations, the growth of which must be governed by exactly the same laws as those that guide and control the development both of personal and family life, though the process takes far longer, as it requires many centuries for peoples to attain nationhood. We can see how true that is in the history of France and England. In the time of Jeanne d'Arc, for instance, France was in no sense a nation as it exists to-day. It was slowly becoming a nation. Jeanne d'Arc's mission was, in part, to further that achievement, the achievement by France of a unified, personal existence. There are moments in the life of a mixed people, even before it attains real personality, when a common danger unites them; but the moment that common danger is over, each section reverts to its separate needs and wants. It must be evident to all of us that nations, as they now exist, are spiritually backward in comparison with the average family unit, and that the average family unit, in its relations with other such units, cannot either rightly, or in terms of ability, co-operate as an individual occasionally is capable of doing.

Now let us turn to the Depression. It seems to me that it is a duty of students of Theosophy to understand these things, and, while always looking for the fundamental cause, which necessarily is spiritual, to realize that this works down through intermediate planes, with causation set up on each plane, until the spiritual factor finds expression in physical form. Let me try to deal both with the basic cause of the Depression, and with some of its intermediate causes also.

Professor Mitchell has already suggested that, fundamentally, the Depression is due to loss of faith in spiritual values, loss of faith in the truth that material wealth, in the real sense, is a reflection, the outermost expression, of spiritual worth. It is exceedingly difficult to see this as true among individuals, because of the factors which confuse the issue—among them, the factor of time, and

our common tendency to judge wealth by appearances, by what is spent, by display; and again because all of us can pick out some person who seems to be rich, when we know, or think we know, that his wealth was not earned rightly.[1] It is much easier to see the truth in the longer life of nations. Even so, when I say "wealth", I am not speaking of luxury, or of the amount of gold hidden away in the Treasury; I am speaking of the well-being of a people, including material well-being. France, Switzerland, Holland, for instance, have great material wealth in comparison with countries such as Bulgaria. The French, generally speaking, are a contented people; they have enough to eat, they love their homes and their work. There you see material well-being as the result of unremitting labour, of steady, ungrudging self-denial, with *duty* as the guiding principle of life. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you." People have been brought up on that text—which is the statement of an eternal truth—but they do not really believe it. There are millions of people who think they believe in God, in heaven, and in their own idea of "good behaviour"; they have faith, as that word is usually used, in all those things; but they calmly take it for granted, without any question whatever, that material wealth is derived from an entirely different source. The *appearance* of immense material prosperity which existed here a few years ago, confirmed people in their illusion. I do not mean that they thought deeply about it, or that they thought at all; they just slid further into their materialistic outlook, which was confirmed by nearly all the Colleges and "experts" in the country, and thus came to take it for granted that, as the result of purely material causes, prosperity had come to stay. Superficially, it looked like it; so their actual experience tended to increase and to complete their spiritual blindness, and to undermine whatever scraps of thin faith they may have possessed originally. In the nature of things, as modern governments are designed to be "representative", their frantic efforts to restore prosperity are based upon material considerations and the use of material means. One result of this has been the emphasis on international remedies, on international agreements, and so forth,—which means, in effect, co-operation as between nations.

I received, a few days ago, a reprint of an article in the *Harvard Business Review*, by Professor Wallace B. Donham, entitled "National Ideals and International Idols". The writer's proposed remedies are entirely unacceptable, but he calls attention to certain facts which we should not overlook. Incidentally, we cannot fail to welcome the unusual experience of deriving light from an economic "expert". Like nearly all of them, Professor Donham does not appear to trouble himself about spiritual causation; but we, while recognizing this as primary, must not forget the strata of intermediate causes, or media, between the physical effect and the ultimate cause. This is a passage in the article which I should like to read to you:

> England, Germany and the United States built great industrial machines of substantially identical nature. Long before the War,

[1] For further consideration of this subject, see the "Screen of Time" in the present issue.—EDITORS.

> bitter competition developed between England and Germany for export trade to a world typically not industrialized, but producing raw materials with which it paid for the products of the industrial countries. We entered as active competitors just as our domestic industrial development had been stimulated to fever heat by war profits and the needs of Europe for reconstruction. Our bankers thought to oust Great Britain from her post of leadership in international finance, and engaged in frenzied competition to advance loans to all the world. Our industrialists, having in mind that an America without automobiles or radios came in a few short years to own one passenger automobile for each six inhabitants and one radio for almost every family, believed that a like process would take place abroad. The export market looked inexhaustible, and the home market one of assured high buying power. Industrial and financial imperialism held us all enthralled. One little fact escaped us. Most of the world can pay for its importations of manufactured goods only by its exports of agricultural and mineral crops. By the middle 1920's we and Europe had so stimulated these crops the world over that there were on all sides unmistakable signs of overproduction. For a time our ill-considered balloon of foreign loans continued to make possible large exports of manufactured goods. But the basis for credit failed, and for this and other reasons England and the United States stopped lending. At once the far-reaching consequences of over-stimulated production in raw commodities made themselves felt. Prices dropped rapidly in accordance with the ancient principle of demand and supply. The buying power of whole nations failed.

Internationalism, then, has its critics, even among experts. None the less, the majority of them having insisted that international trade, and especially the excess of each country's exports over imports, is the key to national prosperity, it is not surprising that governments are basing their policy accordingly, with complete failure to realize that the only real source of prosperity, of the prosperity that lasts, is in the home-life of a nation's people. The theory acted upon seems to be that "the kingdom of God and his righteousness", instead of being the cause, is really a sort of by-product of commercial success and its resulting comfort.

We have seen how difficult co-operation is, both between individuals and families, and that it is impossible unless, first, personality (including unified continuity of purpose) has been attained, and, second, unless self-assertion and egotism have to a considerable extent been surrendered. It must be evident, therefore, that all this talk about international co-operation as cure for the world's collapse, when nations are obviously unready for any such achievement, is premature and illusory,—another instance of the psychic anticipation and perversion of an ultimate spiritual goal. Granting fully that co-operation *is* the ideal when conditions, many hundreds or thousands of years from now, become ripe for its attainment, all that we can have to-day is an effort to give concrete expression to that ideal's debasement, with Pacifism and other distorted notions of "brotherhood" as foundation. Much of the chaos and suffering of the

world at the present time is due to that disastrous effort, and to the unpardonably stupid failure to realize that Germany's occasional show of co-operation, since the War, was actuated solely by her desire to conceal, as yet, the intentions which to-day she is making so abundantly evident.

Co-operation depends always upon the weakest link in the chain, or group of co-operators: that is one reason for stressing the moral weakness of Germany. But even if the nations *could* co-operate commercially; even if commercial prosperity could be obtained in that way—and the event will prove, in my opinion, that neither can produce more than a temporary flutter—the fact remains that, in the most practical sense, commercial prosperity is of far less importance than a nation's safety in the event of attack. It is not easy, I think, for some Americans to grasp the significance of this, because America seems secure,—unless aerial navigation should develop in unexpected ways; unless, for example, an air vehicle should prove able to poison an entire city in its sleep. But think of England and of France: in view of his dreadful experience, I do not see how anything can matter much to a Frenchman, in comparison with the security of his home, of his wife and children, against invasion. Almost any degree of poverty would be preferable to the horrors of German occupation; and this means that France must not only be prepared to fight, must not only be able to carry the war at once into enemy country, beyond her own frontiers, but should aim to make herself so self-dependent, so independent of oversea supplies of all kinds, that she could defend herself indefinitely though both England and America should remain neutral. Does not the same principle hold true of England, very nearly starved to death in 1917! Yet England seems to have learned nothing, for she has left herself in exactly the same condition she was in then: absolutely dependent for her daily bread upon oversea imports, completely at the mercy, in that respect, of the American fleet! Ought she not to make herself self-dependent, as a first step, before worrying much about prosperity and comfort?

The analogy as between nations to-day is not with a group of Quakers in a corner of Pennsylvania; the international analogy, for France in any case, and for most other nations in the last analysis, is with a frontier settlement in this country in the old days, with savages as neighbours,—the primary need being to build a stockade and to see to it that you have a sufficient supply of food and of ammunition to keep your mother, or wife and children, from being starved first and then scalped, or worse. That is the simplicity of it, and the only true analogy. Clearly then—again to use England as illustration of the principle—clearly, in 1919, England should have set to work to use every square yard of her island territory to grow food, so that she would no longer and never again be at the mercy of submarines or of a hostile fleet; she should have re-enlisted her demobilized soldiers for that purpose, giving them every opportunity later to purchase the land they had cultivated. By acting thus on right principle, she would have solved her problem of unemployment before it arose. In the process, England, physically and morally, by this vast increase of peasant proprietors, would have been reborn.

Is that not common-sense? Theosophy *is* common-sense, for it shows us not only the ideal to be attained, but the steps to its attainment,—the practical and immediate application of the principle which the ideal reveals. The trouble with visionaries like Ramsay Macdonald is that they see neither the ideal nor the steps toward it; they are as materialistic, in their way, as the financiers in this country who were responsible for the inflation of 1926 to 1929,—the result, as we have seen, of a false internationalism; as materialistic as the politicians and "statesmen" who should have punctured that inflation in 1927 or earlier, and who failed to do so, in some cases, because either they or their friends were growing rich and still richer, on paper, without any trouble at all. And again Theosophy explains what otherwise would remain an enigma, for it points to the close analogy between an inflated financial condition and an inflated head; makes clear that both are psychic states; teaches us that just as an inflated head, if allowed to run its course, instead of being punctured while still young, necessarily results in final and complete collapse, so an inflated financial condition, unless checked in time, results in a depression such as we are now experiencing. There is more than an analogy here, as we look more deeply into it, for the inflated financial condition, though the outcome *on one plane* of a false internationalism, was the symptom of an inflated and diseased vision which infected all classes of society,—the standard of living and scale of wages, though dropsically swollen, coming to be regarded as a normal and proper recompense for the minimum of labour supplied; while inflated heads and inflated vision, in their turn, are expressions of the rather common attitude that it is the function of God (or his equivalent) to comply with our wishes, rather than for us, his creatures, very humbly and gratefully to obey his laws.

In all these ways, thanks to Theosophy, we may gain a better understanding of what is going on in the world around us, particularly in the sphere of our own Karma. We shall not find, as a result, that we can control international conditions, world conditions; we cannot control even national conditions; but what we can do is to "prepare the way of the Lord" by adding right will to right understanding,—right reaction to our duties and environment. Our environment is always a reflection, a magical image, of some aspect of world-conditions; hence, by right reaction where we stand—not merely by right sympathy but by right firmness—and by doing all things for and with the Lodge, we may exercise a tremendous power as leaven in this great mass of bewilderment and discontent; we may constitute and maintain an ever-burning lamp of faith and vision in this dark night of the human soul.

Let me illustrate what I mean by right reaction to our environment, to our duties,—drawing once more on the domain of internationalism. All of you have read recently of the trial of some British engineers in Soviet Russia. They were accused of spying, of sabotage, and so forth. The behaviour of most of them was equivocal, to put it mildly. Vickers-International of England had sent those men there for commercial purposes. In the first place we should realize that anyone who goes to Soviet Russia and lives there, in such a country and among such people, and does it for pay, lays himself open to the gravest sus-

picion,—unless he turns his back on it after a few weeks' experience. But was Vickers, the employer of those men, any better than they were? Vickers, like the International General Electric Company in this country, had been delighted to do business with the Soviet; had been willing, again like the General Electric, to send a large force of engineers to teach the Soviet how to compete with England and America. The motive, of course, was commercial gain. Setting aside what most of us would regard as the short-sightedness of their policy, was it inherently right or wrong as a reaction to an opportunity?

I know of one corporation in this country that was pursued by "Amtorg" (the Soviet representative in America) to sell things to Russia, and refused. "Amtorg" finally asked: "What is the matter with you people, why will you not trade with us?" So a written answer was sent: "We will not do business with murderers." I think that was a right reaction. I suggest further that if not only all businesses but all nations had adopted the same attitude, and had applied it to others besides Russia, there would be very much less trouble in the world to-day than there is. That is an example of exclusiveness, and right exclusiveness is very often necessary to a right reaction. Elementals of all sizes and conditions loathe exclusiveness; they want you to play with them, they want your attention. Exclusiveness is supposed to be very unbrotherly. There are societies, calling themselves theosophical, which loathe us because they say we are so exclusive, which means unbrotherly as they use the term. Why will we not quarrel with them? Why will we not take sides in their unending bickerings?—it is an outrage and an insult and eminently untheosophical. Well, in literal truth, we have no point of contact with them.

Will and understanding must go hand in hand if the ever-narrowing limitations of personality are to be left behind, if we are to expand upward—reverting to the hour-glass symbol—toward light and life. Understanding without right will is simply impossible. A man's head might be full of all the written wisdom of the world's scriptures and of *The Secret Doctrine*, with the contents of all the encyclopedias added, and his knowledge would only increase his folly unless right will were in control to compel the application in action of that which the mind had learned. The personality must be *forced* to obey until, with the soul in full dominion, it becomes possible not only to obey gladly, but to anticipate all commands.

How else than by self-giving can we prove our gratitude for what we have received, and continually receive, from those who have gone before us and from those who lead our advance! Everything we know to-day, everything that makes life worth living, we owe to the sacrifices of others. No one can wish to become the thing of concentrated selfishness of which or of whom I was speaking; not one of us could think without horror of our deliberate rejection or betrayal of the Lodge; all of us in our hearts long for the hidden Beauty, and for the will to turn toward its light, where there is hope and gladness, and where there are welcoming arms,—to turn and never to turn back. Let it be up, then, and onward for evermore.

As a Society, we shall be as "a voice crying in the wilderness"; but the voice

of John, though not heard far in his day, was heard until he died for it, is being heard, and for ever will be heard where there are generous hearts to respond. And he did prepare the way of the Lord; he did make his path straight,—as we can and must do too, though the path lead straight to the Cross,—straight to the Cross but also to the Resurrection: eternal symbol of an eternal truth. The trouble with most of us is that we want the Resurrection without the Cross, and it cannot be.

So we have our mission: the mission of the Society, the mission of each of its members. There is little enough, it may seem, that some of us are able to do; but let us never forget that the little we can do, in the eyes of infinity, is infinitely worth the doing. In any case we have been called to do it, have been granted that opportunity,—and may make our souls glad, and gladden the souls of those who love us, by simple, steadfast efforts to obey the light as we see it, and to sacrifice the smaller, meaner self for love of those who have loved us through death and beyond it.

The Convention then adjourned until 2.30 p.m., after the usual announcements had been made regarding Convention activities.

Afternoon Session

The Chairman called for the report of the Committee on Nominations.

Report of the Committee on Nominations

Dr. Clark presented the following nominations: for the Executive Committee, Mr. Hargrove, to succeed himself, and Mr. Saxe, who filled the unexpired term of Mr. Johnston; for Secretary, Miss Perkins; for Assistant Secretary, Miss Chickering; for Treasurer, Mr. H. B. Mitchell; for Assistant Treasurer, Mr. Kobbé.

It was voted that the Secretary be instructed to cast one ballot for the election of officers as nominated, and that the Committee be discharged with thanks.

Report of the Committee on Letters of Greeting

Mr. J. F. B. Mitchell read, amid frequent applause, the letters and other greetings to the Convention, extracts from which are printed at the end of this Report. It was explained that the letters from German members which were read, would not be printed, nor their names, as we did not feel sure that conditions in Germany would make this convenient for them.

The report of the Committee on Letters of Greeting having been accepted with thanks, the report of the Committee on Resolutions was called for.

Report of the Committee on Resolutions

Mr. Hargrove: *Mr. Chairman*, Before I speak on behalf of the Committee, may I say that one of the older members comments on the fact that in the early days, when the Society was more active outwardly, the Report of the Chairman of the Executive Committee would necessarily have dealt for the most part with external activities, and that it is a sign of remarkable spiritual growth by the

Society, when instead, as this morning, it is possible to deal with fundamental principles and spiritual realities.

It is gratifying to find that every year an increasing number of Branches and members are celebrating the Convention with us; are giving the whole day to meetings similar to our own, whenever that can be done. We have received, year after year, photographs of the rooms in which they meet on Convention day in Caracas, Venezuela. They have portraits of H.P.B., of Judge, of Mr. Griscom and others, with the well-known symbols of the Society and a profusion of beautiful flowers; they have a full attendance of their members, who strive to unite themselves in heart and mind with us while we are assembled here.

The Committee on Resolutions begs to offer the following resolutions for your approval:

First, that the Chairman of the Executive Committee be authorized and requested to reply to the Letters of Greeting to which we have had the pleasure of listening, or to appoint a deputy for the same purpose.

Second, that the officers of the Society be authorized to visit the Branches.

Third, that the thanks of the Convention be extended to the New York Branch for the hospitality shown during the Convention.

(These three resolutions were put before the Convention as one, and were passed unanimously.)

There are no other formal resolutions to submit to you, but there are certain resolves which I believe to be as much in your minds as in my own. As you are already aware, there is a great deal of suffering at present among members of the Society. This is inevitable. Those who do not suffer so much materially, suffer in other ways. As a Convention, we extend to all our utmost sympathy —firmly excluding ourselves—but may then well ask what we can do practically to help, to comfort, to support. My own answer is that the truth, and the truth alone, can set us free, and that it will be best for all of us if we try collectively to face the facts and their explanation. Quite certainly, nothing would be gained by shutting our eyes to the facts—by creating a world of self-delusion and living in it. The true mystic is always a realist, and we must not fall short of, or betray, our great inheritance,—the mystical tradition.

It has been stated repeatedly in the QUARTERLY and at our annual Conventions, ever since the Armistice of 1918, that the War is by no means over. This statement, in 1928 let us say, may not have seemed literally true. Thanks in part to the Depression, however, it is easier now, for some in any case, to see how true the statement is. How *can* the War be over! "Nothing is settled until it is settled right". So we arrive at fact number one: the whole world is at war. In 1914, as our Chairman said this morning, the issues were clear-cut, while to-day, for reasons which he intimated also, there is much confusion as to what the issues are; none the less, because now, as then, they are moral issues, they remain, beneath the surface, exactly the same.

Fact number two may be stated thus: in 1914, and for as long as that outer war lasted, it was impossible for any human being who had so much as heard of it, to escape from it. He might have fled to the uttermost ends of the earth.

declaring he would have nothing to do with it; but a neutral *did* take part,—on the side of evil instead of on the side of good, seeing that "he who is not with me is against me" whenever an ideal or a principle is attacked. And to-day, in exactly the same way, it is impossible to wash one's hands of the conflict; impossible to refuse to fight. Therefore all of us are at war, and war means suffering. There is no escape from it. One of the terrible illusions under which humanity was labouring and still labours, is that it is entitled to happiness, and that suffering is, as it were, unnatural, and necessarily against the will of God. Yet it requires no faith, but simply some observation of life and of history to realize that the universe is not built on those principles,—and if we do not like the universe, we know at least that death will not deliver us from it. So we see that while at all periods of the world's history, suffering is inseparable from human life, we should not be surprised if we find it intensified at a time of warfare such as this.

Let us face this also: it may be that those who enlist in The Theosophical Society will suffer more than those who merely drift with the tide, because those who volunteer for membership in The Theosophical Society pledge themselves to a certain kind of warfare, just as anyone who joins even a social club pledges himself,—I mean that he pledges himself to some degree of self-control: not to do anything that might bring disgrace on his fellow-members, not to do anything that will interfere with the purposes of the club. That is negative, but it is very clearly understood. In the case of The Theosophical Society, however, there is actually a positive pledge involved, because, phrase it as you choose, no one volunteers for membership in The Theosophical Society without asserting that he is on the side of righteousness and not of evil. The more sincere his membership, the more fully does he pledge himself *to fight* for righteousness and against evil, both in himself and in the world around him. Therefore, as he has enlisted in what is perhaps the most active army in the outer world, on behalf of righteousness and certainly on behalf of the Lodge, he must not be surprised if his life becomes more strenuous, if its trials increase, if, in brief, he finds himself living as though in the midst of battle.

Now let us go back to the Great War. I have read many books relating the experience, at first hand, of men who took part in it. Many of you also have read a number of similar books. Those who have will realize this: all kinds of men fought in that war, and their reactions to it were as varied as their characters. There were those who enlisted or who volunteered then, in fear and trembling. Some of them feared and trembled to the end, but their sense of duty or of self-respect or whatever the motive was, enabled them to "stick it", and they behaved like men. There were others who volunteered with wild enthusiasm, expecting the happiest and the best. In certain cases, that enthusiasm quickly disappeared; very rarely did it last until the end of the third year. Different things happened to it. Occasionally, in shallow natures, it ended in collapse, followed, perhaps, by a new and better start, as war called forth a boy's real manhood. In other cases, the enthusiasm, at first superficial, underwent a sort of spiritual transmutation; from the realities of war, men learned something

of the realities of life, until, either suddenly or by slow degrees, their enthusiasm was transformed into a burning zeal, a passionate love for the Cause which they had come to recognize as their own.

There were others who volunteered from a stern sense of Duty. They did not even think about the dangers, did not imagine any joys; they simply went at it as a duty, met it and took what was coming to them in that spirit. No matter what the miseries, outer and inner, as it was part of their duty to seem to be cheerful, cheerful they seemed. Though not counted often as heroes, they were marvellous soldiers, and, above all, they were men.

Happy were those who began with some dim sense, though an ever-increasing sense, that they were fighting for and with the spiritual world. Some of them, using the language of Christianity, said they were fighting side by side with Christ, for him, under him, and that they had never known what it was to live until they had come to know him in that way. A few turned their hearts into cloisters, and, in the midst of the tempest, found ecstasy.

In every case there was suffering; but—we come to another fact which concerns us vitally—there was a choice; and now, as then, there is a choice; for there are two kinds, radically different kinds, of suffering; one comes from below, the other comes down from above; one is the result of love centred in self, which is hell; the other, of love given to that which is outside of and greater than self,—a suffering shared with the very heart of Being. (I am not speaking now of physical pain, which would need to be considered separately, though the same general principles apply.) This morning, I was speaking of that wretched man whom I used as an illustration of concentrated egotism and self-centredness. He is alive to-day. He is an old man. He is in hell, and he has been in hell for the last thirty years—a hell absolutely of his own creation—living on imaginary grievances which he thinks real, with bitter resentments as his daily bread; in hell, and you can do nothing for him. Anything that you say simply increases his torment, is proof to him of your cruelty. Similarly, there were some who fought in the Great War, who could think of nothing but themselves and their grievances, and who resented bitterly the fact that they were there and everything that happened to them. They too were in hell; and if there could be any among us to-day who could think of nothing but our own miserable selves and of what we perhaps might imagine to be our unique and intolerable sufferings,—then we should be in hell, and should deserve to be there. But, as I have said, we may choose,—and who would not choose the suffering that springs from love, rather than that other! The more we love, the more we must suffer. How could any man have gone through the Great War, loving his Cause, without suffering? He was not suffering for himself; he was suffering for his Cause. Perhaps he was in command of others, and saw that they were losing their morale—men, it may be, of whom personally he was fond, crumbling under the pressure; and then, giving himself unstintedly in an effort to lift them out of themselves, perhaps he failed to revive them. Must he not have suffered? Suppose he was a Frenchman; had heard of this calamity in Russia and of that in Roumania,—and feared that France was reaching the

end of her rope. Did he not suffer? Sometime ago, I read in a French magazine (I do not know whether it was history or fiction—naturally names were not given), the experience of a Colonel who had gone through the War, and who spoke frankly of his suffering. He had two sons,—one reckless, foolish, and fond of showing off. He knew that son would be killed. That was comparatively easy. The other he knew to be at heart a weakling, wrapped up in himself, a moral coward; lacking grit, lacking tenacity of purpose; and because he was a father, what could he do but pray with anguish that his son would not founder, but would see it through to the end? We cannot imagine his suffering. It was not hell, however; hell is a different thing; hell is concentration in and on self. That father was not concentrated on self; he was fighting the battles of his country, heart and soul; giving himself completely to that warfare; and yet, because he was a father, and because he felt responsible for his son's honour and his own, he suffered with and for the love of honour that springs from the Lodge itself.

We must choose: that is the point. If we think to ourselves, No, I do not want either; I want to be happy: what is there to say? He who seeks happiness will never find it, though he seek it to the end of time and to the world's end. That is not Theosophy only; it is the finality of human experience. The longer one lives just as a frail human being, the more tired one grows of human likes and dislikes. Such things have nothing whatever to do with life or with reality. Let people take their likes and dislikes and live with them if they must, but not inflict them upon others. I wish that parents would bring up their children on that basis. If a child says he does not like doing what he ought to do and has been told to do, he should be met with total lack of interest and the explanation that real men and women never waste time over considerations of that sort. Some parents would think that cold-hearted, but in deepest truth it is the kindest treatment. We should do unto others as we would be done by, and if we had to live our youth over again, is not that the bringing-up we should prefer? How else can children be given a chance to dominate life, instead of being dominated by it? What would any parents, with the least understanding of Theosophy, wish for children they love? That they should become the restless, dissatisfied, vain-glorious, futile creatures we see all around us, ending, perhaps, in a hell of self-pity; or that they should become, not only unselfish, not only strong in will and deed, but that which all of us ought to become in time,—some shadow at least of the glories that have been revealed to us in living flesh and blood, in history, of those whom we recognize as our saviours and the saviours of the race? What else is life for, and how else could life possibly be worth living? Do not let us despair because we know how far from that we are to-day. "A thousand years in His sight are but as yesterday." If some of us should grow old and feeble, what has that to do with it? In our souls we are young! All of life stretches before us, and we can wipe out the past in a moment, if we will cease to live in the past and live in to-day and in eternity.

This Convention, then, must carry a message not only of understanding, but of hope to one and all, for the splendour that lies ahead of us, unless—which

is not credible—unless our hearts cling to the mud and the filth which ought to be at our feet. So I venture to express, on behalf of the other members of the Committee, something of that which I believe must have been in their thoughts and which I know is in their longing. We blame ourselves at times, because it seems impossible to tear aside the curtain of Truth and reveal the everlasting verities, with all the beauty and nobility of that divine world. One should be able to do it; but one cannot do it and knows one cannot do it, and therefore one suffers. But at least we can try; and one and all of us, in our feeble way, can try in daily life, from hour to hour, to express, no matter how feebly, at least that glimmer of the best that we see, forgetting ourselves in a simple, unassuming effort to lighten the burden of others by keeping our vision clear, our faith radiant, and our wills fast set in the service of those Elder Brothers whom we call our Masters and the saviours of mankind.

Dr. Torrey (also speaking, by request, as a member of the Committee on Resolutions): In a certain college a faculty-student symposium was held recently to consider the question: "Is life worth living?" In view of the interpretation of world-conditions made here to-day, the results were sufficiently appalling to give us cause for uneasiness.

As might have been expected the undergraduate contribution to the momentous question was, in the words of one of them, "nothing to write home about". But what were the opinions of those whose business it is to mould and inspire the minds and hearts of our youth?

One contributor felt that a scented handkerchief or a bow of ribbon stored away in a secret box, constituted a tender memory which had made life worth while. He should have added Strauss waltzes, moonlight and roses, lyric poetry and the other stock in trade of the sentimentalist.

Another had found in his books and his laboratory a sufficiency of recompense for the trouble of living. A third had discovered a panacea for life's ills in camping and snow-shoeing and mountain climbing.

A clergyman voiced his ideal of a warless world controlled by educated men of good will, who, under the banner of science, are to build a socialist Utopia where "alabaster cities shine undimmed by human tears".

Finally a gentleman noted for his independence of thought proceeded to castigate his audience with heavy sarcasm. He regretted that in a moment of weakness he had engaged to speak in such a futile assemblage. He was not so sure that life was worth living. But if it must be lived it should be lived with Elizabethan gusto and lived to the full. There was a realm of Platonic truths, however, and one might not compromise with one's highest ideals.

You will say: "These men need Theosophy." Yes. For Theosophy comes not to destroy but to fulfil, and even pitiful and childish ideals might be transformed into things of Beauty and Wisdom and Will. A student of Theosophy might point out first of all that the various ideals to which these men gave voice are comprehended under the three aspects of the Trinity, though unfortunately they are seen in reflection upside down. In the sentimentalism of the

first speaker is a reflection of the Eternal Beauty. Youth and spring, Chopin Nocturnes and Tschaïkovsky symphonic poems, regrets, longings, beauty passing and vanishing and dark night coming on—these are the kaleidoscopic flashes and gleams fallen from a world of Eternal Beauty and caught in the mind's mirror. Over the reflected glory lies the pathos and pain which attends all perishable things. Theosophy could show him that back of the reflections stand realities which do not perish, and that those realities are the heritage of souls who arise and put aside their toys.

The scholar's ideal is a reflection of Divine Wisdom, but it ends likewise, as we know, in frustration and pain. The world of knowledge is so great and the life span is so brief; the knowledge which we win "with a whole soul's tasking" is so barren and so far removed from life. So to this student we might say: Theosophy could help you to discover a system of nature and of life which convinces by its symmetry, its harmony, its perfection of form, and its ability to weave the tangled threads of knowledge into a pattern. The mystery of the world scheme is not insoluble; the end of knowledge need not be that Faustian despair which drives men to the gods of sensuality who rule the underworld.

The nature lover, and the clergyman who longs to set the disordered world straight, are both, in their respective ways, the devotees of Karma Yoga. One wishes to conquer stubborn mountains, while the other longs to conquer stubborn capitalists who "exploit the masses". Theosophy could help the mountain climber to find a guide who might lead him to heights he never dreamed of climbing, while the socialist-preacher would find the pages of the QUARTERLY crammed with diagnoses of his complaint, and remedies for his particular kind of psychic obsession.

To the man of Elizabethan gusto we could tell the truth (we have), and he would understand, at least, what we mean. He it is to whom our books refer as standing at the summit of human evolution and incarnating the culture of the past. And there he stands and stands and stands. To him religion is but one element in the totality of elements which make up the rounded life. He has yet to realize that a flower must die as a perfect flower in order to become a perfect fruit, and that an older order of being must pass away before a new order of being can arise.

Yes, these men need Theosophy, but it is evident that Theosophy is not for them. They are closed to faith; their brains admit no new ideas; they are the painful product of Nineteenth Century naturalism and a Germanized Ph.D. degree. Theosophy is a medicine too vigorous for their enfeebled constitutions —it might blow their iron-clad skulls open. Yet it may be that their very blindness and skepticism have been blessings in disguise to preserve them against rash undertakings. Can one take Theosophy seriously till one is ready for it?

Mr. Judge wrote: "Theosophy is for all men", yet the QUARTERLY says repeatedly that "Theosophy is for the few". How shall we reconcile these divergent statements? Perhaps Mr. Judge was thinking of the loss of faith which had come upon the world, misled through the arrogant assertions of agnostic science

and the timid acquiescence of a supine clergy. Through Theosophy alone could man be brought back to faith, since it alone can meet science on its own ground and at the same time redeem and reanimate the ancient symbols of faith. But who shall carry forward this work of redemption and spread these truths among the masses? History has shown us that it is "the few, the very, very few" who are loyal enough and courageous enough to live the life in order that they may know the doctrine.

Who are the few and why is the number so small? We have most of us, I think, seen one of the subjects of time fired by the vision which Theosophy sets forth. So often the call comes to the young—to the youth who has surmounted the foothills of learning and has begun to weary of the endless and futile analysis to which his studies lead. Theosophy comes with its marvellous promise. For a time he lives in a new world and he sets his face valiantly toward the heights. Then his trials begin. Baffled and beaten back by the wiles of an alarmed personality, he gives up the struggle and turns back to his old life of irresponsibility. He saturates himself with art, science, music, drama, but the light has gone out of them. So his years pass away in resentment against the cruel deal which Fate has handed him.

When, therefore, I see young men and women hailing the light of Theosophy with deep and sincere emotion, I am not altogether free from sadness. Youth and spring and Chopin Nocturnes *are* attractive. For the majority of these young enthusiasts it means defeat, and in proportion to their sincerity is the measure of their distress. They will try in vain to satisfy their hunger with the husks which the swine did eat. To the few, the very, very few will come the immemorial conflict—a battle full of pain and weariness and boredom, hope and despair in turns, rapture of life and longings for death. "And this shall last for long, that the iron of it may enter into the citadel of thy heart, where pride and fear, contending against me, would secure the inmost chambers from my approach."

Is life worth living? Yes, always, if the universe exist for the purposes of soul and evolution be a fact. For the child the lessons of the nursery, many times repeated, may lead finally to the full-grown personality; and for the full-grown personality the way of life's experience runs forward to the day when a true image shall struggle out from the caterpillar chrysalis of animal man. There is no other way.

Dr. Hohnstedt (also a member of the Committee): Dr. Torrey has just spoken of the need to evolve from the nursery. That is what the members of the Cincinnati Branch are trying to do. I do not know whether we have succeeded yet, but we are trying,—and our Branch now has forty-seven years of effort behind it, and an enthusiasm that does not wane, but increases.

The Chairman, referring to what had been said in comment upon the report of the Executive Committee, suggested that the same principle applied to the report of the Committee on Resolutions; and that in lieu of verbal formulations,

such as occasionally are inscribed on parchment, members of the Society had been invited to inscribe resolutions on their own wills and hearts.

Reports from delegates were then called for.

Dr. Hohnstedt, for the Cincinnati Branch, said that while the depression had affected all their members materially, they had not become depressed in spirit. "The Work is a part of us—we cannot stop; we just *have* to go on".

Mrs. Rose, for the Providence Branch, brought greetings, and spoke of the great desire of members to make their gratitude count.

Mr. Forbes (Chattanooga) expressed generous thanks to the Quarterly.

Mr. La Dow: I think that at this time in the afternoon, during a Convention, anyone who is requested to speak is divided between two feelings. One is that there is nothing more to say, and the other is that he has so much to say, he does not know where to begin. But after all, what we want to say is really very simple—it is, how grateful we must all feel to be here and to be brought in contact with the real spiritual powers which express themselves here; brought in contact with the atmosphere of this Convention. Also, we must feel the need of making such resolutions as the Chairman has indicated.

It occurs to me that there is a danger which I can illustrate by reference to a story or parable concerning a Buddhist saint. This saint was meditating on the great sacrifice of the Buddha. He began to feel gratitude and resolution welling up in his heart, and concluded that it was necessary for him to give something in return for all that the Buddha had given to him. So he began to offer things up. He said, I offer up all the flowers and all the mountains and all the oceans, and so on, making a long list. Then he "came to" with a shock, and realized that he did not own any of these things. Of course, being a saint, he came back to the real resolution, which was to offer up himself (the only thing he could offer up); to offer up those powers which he had himself received from above.

I wonder what we mean when we offer up our powers on the altar of the heart. One can say "I offer up" some imagined talent, but what does it mean? One thing I am sure it means is that when we offer up that thing, we literally abandon self-interest in it. We give it back, in spirit, in will, to the Master from whom we received it; and we leave it to his judgment to determine whether we shall receive it again or not. We do not have to worry about that. It is conceivable that this gift might be transferred to another.

Really, one feels that all one can say, after what has been said, is to express one's real gratitude at the privilege of being here, and to hold fast to the will—which I am sure we all have at this moment—really to do something about it.

Mr. Auchincloss: It is impossible to come to a Convention of the Society without missing Mr. Johnston; and time, as it goes on, only makes us realize all the more keenly, the greatness of our loss. I speak of him especially to-day because, of all those great souls who have helped us and taught us and who have gone on, he was the last to go; and because he was known personally and loved

by the newer members of the Society, and by the younger members who have grown up in recent years within the Society. And it is not only at Convention time that we miss him—his address of welcome to the delegates, and his Report as Chairman of the Executive Committee, with all that was in them of gracious, charming, friendly courtesy, of humour, of inspiration and of Truth. We are beginning to realize more and more, all the time, as never before, what he was; how much he gave, constantly, to all of us; and, thinking back over some of the things that he said, we are only now beginning to realize all that he meant when he said them; only now beginning to act on some of the things that he said; to do something about them. He was with us for a long time, and yet, in a sense, we did not really know him in certain ways, until after he had gone.

There is much to think about in all this. You will remember how, at that last supper with his Disciples, the Master Christ pointed out to them that if they had known him, they would have known the Father also. You will remember how Philip turned to him and said, "Show us the Father"; and how the Master Christ said to him, in what must have been almost despair at his lack of understanding, at his failure to comprehend, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?"

We do not differ very much from Philip. For years, we have had given to us, with both hands, Truth. For years, we have been told what we were to do about it; and we have done some of the things, perhaps many of the things, which we have been told to do. Yet, what has our performance been, compared to what it might have been, if we had grown in all ways of inner insight and knowledge and understanding as it has been open to us to grow? If we had used to the utmost those opportunities for effort, for self-discipline, for obedience, which were given us? They were gifts to us from above, these opportunities, given to us through those who have taught us for so long. They are, still, gifts to us; and we cannot fail any longer to lay hold of them, and, going forward in the spirit of the Warrior, to use them as they are meant to be used. We cannot fail any longer to go through to fulness of understanding and comprehension. We cannot risk any longer having said to us, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me?"

Mr. Miller: This is an occasion when I, for one, feel that we New York members upon whom so much is poured, by whom so many blessings are received, may well feel ashamed of the little we have done compared to the help we have received, when we hear, as we do every year, from some of our faithful members who have not the privileges which we enjoy.

Mr. Saxe spoke of contempt for law as a characteristic of American civilization, suggesting that but few Americans could be entirely free from this, and are likely to carry the same attitude into their inner efforts, either by ignoring the more inconvenient rules laid down in such books as *Light on the Path*, or by postponement of obedience to them. "It might be worth while to adopt 'Do it now' as our motto, while the Convention is still with us."

Mr. Kobbé spoke of recent declarations against war—righteous war included—by a number of students in England, Scotland, and America, as a result of Pacifist propaganda and agitation; called attention to the opposite tendency in Germany, where youth is "being kept war-minded", and is "being trained, physically and mentally, ready to start at a moment's notice",—and appealed to Anglo-Saxon youth to remember the Bonnie Prince Charlies and the Nathan Hales of the past, whose qualities were of the soul and do not die. Mr. Kobbé concluded by saying: "I make that appeal here to-day because I know that when we speak in Convention we are within earshot of the warriors of the Great Lodge, and of those warriors who have preceded us in the Movement. Confidently I entrust this appeal to them, as one might entrust to an expert photographer a snapshot to have enlarged."

The Chairman then called upon Messrs. Woodbridge, Miller, Russ, Kobbé, all Juniors, the Convention showing great interest and welcoming their speeches with hearty applause. Next, Mr. Russ, Sr., spoke, and after him—

Dr. Clark: I have something quite definite to say, which there seems need to speak of, but because I have to say it by way of a book, my point may not at first be clear. The title of the book is *The Living God*. The author is Dr. Nathan Söderblom, the Lutheran Archbishop of Sweden. The book is composed of lectures given at the University of Edinburgh, in an annual series, and among former lecturers in that series were William James and Bergson. In the book is almost everything one would expect to find from a Lutheran Archbishop; those things will not be mentioned. There are other things that could not be expected and that are noteworthy. For example, you would not expect a man of his station and rank, who died just last autumn, to say that the highwater mark of our civilization was, *not* the twentieth century in which he filled a place, but the thirteenth century.

His study, in the book, is of the revelations made of Himself by the one living God. All the religions of the world are revelations, he thinks, of that one living Being. The last that he studies is the revelation made in Judæa. Dr. Söderblom declared constantly to his audience that he could prove his religion by history. Just in passing, he states that the most splendid revelation of the Divine Spirit since Judæa is the Catholicism of France,—the Catholicism of France as it focussed in the person of Joan of Arc. Is not that an unexpected statement from a Lutheran Archbishop, the background of whose training was German?

Then we should not expect a man, burdened with the degrees of English, Scotch, German, and Swedish Universities, to make so clear the old distinction which King Akhnaton, in Egypt, made between those who know and those who know *about*. This book is a study of those who know. The subtitle is "Basal Forms of Personal Religion", and he draws the line very sharply. He gives a chapter to Plato, because Plato was a man of religion, but Aristotle, as a mere theologian, falls outside the field of study. Here are some of his chapter headings: "Religion as Method, Yoga" (A Study of the Upanishads), "Religion as Devo-

tion—Bhakti" (The Religion of the *Bhagavad Gîta* in India and of Mahayana Buddhism in Japan), "Religion as a Fight Against Evil, Zoroaster", and so on. These chapters are not studies of the great founders and their revelations as specimens of morbid psychology, but are a reverent consideration of the revelations made by Himself, of the one living God. Dr. Söderblom approaches each subject in the spirit indicated by the saying of Erasmus regarding Confucius and Socrates: "There are many saints in heaven whose names are not in our catalogues."

One or two sentences from the opening chapter, lead to the definite and pertinent thing of which there seems need to speak to-day. To make quite clear what his approach is toward the subject, he takes first "the greatest of the religious thinkers and mystics of India", Shankara Acharya, and links with him Saint Bernard of Clairvaux and John of the Cross in Spain. He spoke of those individuals to students at Edinburgh! Scottish history is very foggy in my mind,—was it at Edinburgh that a footstool was once thrown at a visiting Anglican Bishop who said very much less than this Swedish Archbishop said? Speaking of the names given to the Divine in the different religions of the world, he writes: "God, or the Divine, or the inscrutable mystery of peace in the heart, or that mysterious existence which they call the Infinite or Nirvana, or even the Nothing." Is not that extraordinary? What a list of names to be separated only by the word "or"! Do they all mean the same thing? It is a Lutheran, Protestant Archbishop who is speaking. God becomes all in the lives of such saints, from Persia, India, Japan, ancient Peru or Mexico, wherever it may be—man nothing. "Thus it was in Bhakti religion, perhaps in Socrates, certainly in Zoroaster, and in the Biblical revelation." That is, he accepts the validity of those religions formerly called outlandish. Differences in those religions could no more be a matter of dissension than in a family the decision of a daughter to do her shopping in one place while her brother does his elsewhere. "It is natural that the methods and stages are, in the main, everywhere the same (whether in ancient Peru or in pre-Spanish Mexico), and they are simplified in the West in these three . . . the Purgative, the Illuminative, the Unitive way." To how many is that statement what it is to him, namely, a commonplace fact, something that is true and of which there can be no discussion? Is not such a book an extraordinary illustration of the way theosophical teaching has quietly spread through the world? Dr. Söderblom studies those different religions most reverently, and in his last chapter his subject is the religion that had its rise in Judæa. Speaking of that, he refers to the idea of cycles that had come from India and spread wide, being given forth again by Virgil in many forms, chiefly in his famous Fourth Eclogue. Virgil declared that there was to be a new birth from above, which would bring on earth gentler manners, purer laws; belief in that coming revelation was widespread, and the whole world at that time was looking to Rome for guidance and leadership, looking everywhere save in the territory that stretches from Bethlehem to Calvary. In view of that world-wide search, Saint Paul took a firm stand and declared: What you seek has already come; there has been that new birth from above; those

gentler manners, purer laws *have* been inaugurated; the choice given you is to follow them or not, to be loyal or not.

Strangely, that thought was going through my head before this book came into my hand two days ago, of the search, the looking of the world toward this country for what it calls leadership. I asked myself: is not that expectation only the last reverberation on the husk, on the rind of the world, of something that has already taken place? What we have heard here to-day, this morning and this afternoon,—is not that proof of the new divine birth from above, of the gentler manners, the nobler laws that have been inaugurated, and is not the choice and responsibility of each one of us to follow and to be loyal to that revelation already made? We do not seek something new. Our opportunity is to follow the standard that has been raised.

Mr. J. F. B. Mitchell: Dr. Hohnstedt spoke of what I had much in my heart to express, the wish that these things might become a part of us—so much a part that we could not refrain from doing them. Before the Convention, I tried to think what it was that the Masters who founded the Society, the great Masters of the Lodge, would want from it: what they would want for us, for the world, for the Lodge itself,—from this Convention and from us. Mr. Hargrove summed up what they would want for us when he spoke of the infinite glory to which the Lodge strives to draw us,—from the hell of thinking only of oneself, a state in which, according to the Zoroastrian scriptures, though a man be pressed close by thousands around him, he believes himself to be alone.

It is for us to make sure that now, while we have the light, while the vision given us is still before our eyes, we shall so work it into every fibre of our bones that, when we come back next time—it may be in the darkness of a dark world, when the eyes of our soul may perhaps fail to open—the very force of habit will have made these things so much a part of us that we shall not be able to stop doing them, and that they may take us toward our goal, as a horse will take a man home in the darkest night. The horse has often been used as a symbol of the personality. We can make our personalities that kind of guide.

Then, what is it that the Lodge would wish for the world from this Convention? While I was considering that, I came across a quotation from Mr. Judge, in an old Quarterly, from page 21 of Volume III of *The Path*, to the effect that those who give expression to their aspiration in action create conditions in the astral light which help more advanced souls to come down from higher spheres. Every man who lives his ideals, can help, no matter how obscure his life and acts may seem. By living his aspiration in action, he engraves a picture on the astral light which can be reflected back all over the world. Only one man is needed to play a note on the violin, and millions of people can hear it over the radio. Do we suppose that the Lodge is less powerful than Radio City? If one man can attain, the Lodge can multiply his achievement many thousand-fold. One poet writes a poem, and millions of copies can be made. One Roland dies at Roncesvalles, holding up his right gauntlet to heaven, in token of utter fealty to his liege Lord. He was alone when Saint Michael came and accepted it, *de*

par le Roi du Ciel. But the picture was engraved on the astral light, whence, later, it was reflected to the heart of a poet, who gave the world the *Chanson de Roland.* Who can say how many victories the inspiration of Roland's death has won for France.

Such truths emphasize the need for straight thinking on our part. No one can have come to these Conventions of The Theosophical Society year after year, without being deeply impressed with the effect on the thought of the world of what is said here, and hence with the responsibility that rests on every one of us for the character of his own thought. It would be very interesting to go back over the old Convention Reports to see what was said, and what the thought of the world was, at that time, on each subject discussed, and also what it was one year, five years, ten years later on that same point. One of the things that the Lodge must be seeking to do, is to guide the thought of the world.

It is, perhaps, not for any of us to say what the world most needs, but it is our duty to think about its needs, and to see them as clearly as we can. If I may venture to express my own thought, what the world needs more than anything else is the belief that there *is* that which is wholly admirable, worthy of the completest devotion of a man's heart, and the ideal of giving that devotion. It needs the aristocratic ideal, one half of which is the sense of responsibility toward those under one, and the other half is the joy of looking up, of loyalty, admiration and devotion to those above one, the joy of aspiration. It has been said that the soul lives on hope, and on admiration of that toward which it aspires. One of the things which the world needs to-day is something on which the soul can live. It needs a goal, the vision of a goal with all that that implies.

What does the Lodge want from us? The Lodge must want instruments. What does it ask of an instrument? First, and above all, there must be the burning desire to *be* an instrument. And then there must be complete loyalty,—as was said here some Conventions ago, "the loyalty of a devoted dog". It was one of the great saints who prayed the prayer, "O Lord, give me that which every dog has by nature, utter devotion and loyalty". If utter loyalty and wholehearted desire to serve be given, surely there is nothing that the Lodge cannot do. Here is a test that we can apply to ourselves: how much of our thought could, with safety, be multiplied a hundred times and reflected to anyone else? Can what I am doing and thinking, be safely intensified by the Lodge force? The application of that test requires constant alertness, and means a definite choice between the interests of the Lodge—which are identical with those of our true selves—and the interests of the personality. One must pray with all one's heart for the power, now while our eyes are open, to make the choice aright and to make it irrevocably. On the one side there is the infinite glory, the final victory of the Lodge, for which it has striven all these ages; and, on the other, what? Chaos and ultimate extinction.

Last night, thinking of this meeting, I wondered what was the last thing that Mr. Griscom had said at a Theosophical Convention. I turned back to the July, 1918, QUARTERLY, and found that he had spoken of Jeanne d'Arc and the miracle that the Lodge had wrought through her as its instrument, the

tremendous things that had been accomplished because of her loyalty and devotion. And he went on to say that each one of us could be used in the same way, to the same great ends, if we would but conquer the little sins and the small weaknesses that keep the Lodge from using us.

The Convention also had the pleasure of hearing from Mr. Armstrong, Mr. Brush, Mr. Costello, Mr. Fisher, Mr. A. Griscom, Mrs. Lake, and Dr. Woodworth.

The thanks of the Convention having been voted to its officers, with a special vote of thanks to the editors of the QUARTERLY, the Convention adjourned.

ISABEL E. PERKINS,
Secretary of Convention.
JULIA CHICKERING,
Assistant Secretary of Convention.

LETTERS OF GREETING

AUSSIG, CZECHO-SLOVAKIA.

To the Members of The Theosophical Society in Convention Assembled: Our hearts and thoughts are more than ever directed to the Annual Convention of this year; more than ever we feel that we must exert ourselves to the utmost to accomplish our tasks, to satisfy our obligations towards the Masters of Wisdom to whom we owe all. . . . Our every thought, our every wish is turned to the source of power, the only support that humanity has in this time of great calamity, and we implore the Masters of Wisdom and their followers to grant us mercy, because to ask for justice would bring about destruction. We ask for strength to the end to meet the dark powers of the Black Lodge and their obsequious creatures.

Seeing our own personal futility, we feel that the power which is able to transform all things, can also enable us to face those dark powers which are trying recently again in their blind madness to turn the partly lost war into a complete victory, thereby destroying wholly themselves and all of their allies. . . .

In the name of the Aussig Branch:
HERMANN ZERNDT,
Chairman.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE, ENGLAND.

To the Members of The Theosophical Society in Convention Assembled: On behalf of the members of the Newcastle-on-Tyne Branch, I have much pleasure in conveying to you our heartiest greetings and good wishes. We look forward to your deliberations more keenly and eagerly each year, and we shall be with you in heart and mind again as we gather at our special meeting on this occasion.

We feel that the Society is what the Branches and members make it, and we hope that our efforts during the past year have done something to strengthen and consolidate it. We realize that there must be consecration and self-sacrifice, vision and understanding, if the Society is to be *a living force* in this outer world. . . .

A year of embodiment is a year of love, and what rejoicing for the souls who meet! And we who cannot meet in person can meet in spirit; can catch the fire and enthusiasm as it is first wafted through the ether and later translated into living winged words. So much for our joy, then, and is it not helpful? Shall we not make it the basis of further effort; a heartening resolve for the work that lies ahead? In this spirit we can not only face our responsibilities, but can bravely accentuate them—as H.P.B. so strongly advocated.

We, therefore, trust that the keynote of this Convention will be fearless onslaught against the powers of evil by definite allegiance to the powers of good. We shall thus be truly hastening the advent of the next Lodge Messenger, and fulfilling the work of the Masters in the world. Another day of history will then have been made, and a valiant start for the next milestone.

E. HOWARD LINCOLN,
President.

AYLSHAM, ENGLAND.

Mrs. Graves wrote: We members of the Norfolk Branch T. S. send our warmest and most heartfelt greetings to all of you for Convention. I need not tell you that we shall be with you in thought and aspiration, joining our hopes, our efforts, and our resolutions to yours, and endeavouring to share with you the spirit of faith and courage that we know will animate all your deliberations. Perhaps there was never in the world's history, a time when courage was more necessary than it is to-day. All that we hear and see around us, the desperate self-seeking, the struggle for existence, the forgetfulness and the trampling down of all Reality, of all that makes for the good of humanity, the terrible cruelty of nations and individuals, the craving for sensation in all forms, make us heartsick, and the strongest spirit quails before the terrific onset of the powers of Darkness.

Yet we have reason for faith and courage. The Light *is* shining steadily, and there is not one of us who can fail to see it, if we will but look. As each year passes and Convention time comes round again, I think we feel less the limitations of time and space, and more and more that we are a united body, thinking the same thoughts, serving the same Masters, and we *know* that their Cause must triumph in the end.

H.P.B. left an injunction with those who were intimately connected with her life and work here during the closing years of her life, and they in their turn handed it on to us. It was that her flag *must* be kept flying.

Mrs. Bagnell wrote: At present all our thoughts must turn to Convention, feeling our great responsibilities and opportunities in regard to it; hoping and praying that it may be a truly great one, in every sense of the word, and that good may come of it for the whole of humanity. Above all that it may hear and understand the message the Masters have for it, and that hearing it we may all put it into practice in our daily lives. It really seems at present as if half the world had gone mad, and one wonders if it is because the Gods wish to destroy it.

Yet that does not appear to be at all in accord with our Theosophical teachings, and I think that one ought rather to believe that this fierce boiling pot is designed to bring all the scum to the top, so that it may be swept aside and what is good underneath may then have a chance of appearing.

In 1915, one of our older members sent me a card on the back of which she had written, "These are days to try the faith of many, therefore it behoves us, to whom so much has been given, to have brighter and stronger faith; that, beholding our own, others shall also believe and be comforted."

I think that these days, more than those of the War, must "try the faith of many", for then the issue was clear cut, and vast numbers of men rose to the call of their great opportunity; whereas now, on every side, one sees little but confusion, irresolution, discord and misery.

At such times more than at any other men need all the wonderful help and light that Theosophy can give them, and never, so it seems to me, have its teachings stood out so clear and shining against the dark background of this unhappy world.

Miss Bagnell wrote: Recently I came across an explanation of the meaning of *pontifex*, the priest who is also the chêla. Now that word means "bridge-builder", and it came to me with some force that this is the mission of would-be disciples and of all sincere members of the Society, to build and to maintain that Bridge between this world of frail and stumbling humanity, and that true and eternal world of our home in the Heavens, where we know that the power of the Lodge resides.

OSLO, NORWAY.

The members of the Oslo Branch wish to send to all members of The Theosophical Society in Convention assembled their fraternal and heartfelt greetings, joining with you in thanks for all the blessings received, and praying that in spite of all discord in the outer world there shall nevertheless be hearts open for those souls who shall fight their way through all discord and show humanity the path to tread to divine harmony whether within or outside this mortal body.

HENNING DAHL.

Mr. Harry Knoff wrote: Reviewing the past year, it appears that no country, no single individual, has escaped being affected in some way or other by the wave of misfortune sweeping over the world—the ever-increasing hardships of the present day—and one is apt to lament and complain, to voice protests against the unjustness of "Fate". Few are they who recognize that we are receiving but just and well-deserved Karma—that of nations as well as of individuals—and, in doing so, *try* at least to make the best of it. Still fewer admit that this should be accepted as a splendid opportunity given unto us. Such a standpoint being infinitely higher and more compelling, it can hardly be expected to become popular, nor is it likely to be perceived intuitively, without the aid of spiritual guidance,—Theosophy.

Kali Yuga, the Black Age, has to me, however, taken on quite a different aspect after realizing the truth of what was stated at a meeting of the New York Branch this winter (January 28th), to the effect that if it were not for Kali Yuga—spirit descending deeper and deeper into matter—Theosophy would not have been offered to us to-day. When contemplating this thought, it grows in significance to comprise everything worth while, replacing the old bitterness with deep gratitude, becoming a new incentive to life, inspiring courage and faith in the wise governing of the Masters. Truly, "There is no other thing than that which Theosophy brings which is sufficient to support mankind in their trials."

TORONTO, CANADA.

To the Members of The T. S.: Once again it is our privilege to send most hearty greeting to the Convention.

At this time, when the depression has brought to so many people the truth that those who have placed their dependence on material things and personal well-being have been building on a foundation of sand, it is for those who have been building on a more solid foundation to endeavour to call attention to the fact that life has a spiritual basis and that all who ignore this truth are doomed to disappointment. So few there are who have placed their dependence on the soul; so many to whom the loss of material advantages has seemed the loss of all.

Yet this really is a time of opportunity. Such is human nature in its perversity that it is necessary for trouble and anxiety to come at times, that it may be forced to recognize that the things of this world are evanescent and not to be depended upon. It is for those who have had a vision of truth to hold firm in their faith that all is well when it is realized that the well-being of the soul is the important thing in life; that man is creator in the deepest sense, not only of the present and the future, but also of just what the present means to him. . . .

We recognize with gratitude the help that has been given to us, and believe there may be many who, perhaps unconsciously, are awaiting the help *we* may give to inspire them to seek for a deeper meaning in life and so make use of life's ever-present opportunity.

ALBERT J. HARRIS,
Toronto Branch.

CARACAS, VENEZUELA.

To the Members of The Theosophical Society in Convention Assembled: The members of the Venezuela Branch hereby convey their heartiest greetings to the fellow-members who integrate the visible body of The Theosophical Society and pay homage to its invisible Founders, whose hearts are here because this is their treasure.

Our activities have been almost the same on the surface though different in their innermost significance, as things are not different because they change but because we change: a new perception making all things new.

So we can say that this year both Christianity and War have appeared to us in a new light because we have seen them with a new mind. This new understanding is itself a new consciousness, and this consciousness is the reason of life in more distant cycles, or better say, more inward ones: each plane of consciousness reached being a cycle that we have drawn nearer.

This study of Christianity and War has been based on the editorials and other articles in the QUARTERLY, and we are making a selection of this material to have several copies typewritten so that each student may have at hand this arsenal of spiritual ammunition which will be wanted in the near future, trying in such wise to thought-broadcast this consciousness through the world, or bring it to the tribune or to the press, if necessary, in due time.

Complementary of this new vision has been the study of the Reports of the New York Branch, the work of which has always been highly appreciated by our members here. . . .

A. GONZÁLEZ JIMÉNEZ,
Secretary.

WHITLEY BAY, ENGLAND.

To the Members of The Theosophical Society in Convention Assembled: The members of the Whitley Bay Branch send sincere fraternal greetings. We have always looked forward to Convention day with a deep sense of its importance. This year, with the prevailing world conditions of instability and seeming chaos, the full importance of the aims and objects of the Society must be more fully realized by all members. To do this it only becomes necessary to view the results of the ineffectual platitudes which masquerade as wisdom, such as "The right of Self-Determination for all nations", which was declared as the right policy after the war, and which was immediately taken by individuals and nations to mean that the determination of the lower self to do as it pleased was to be the policy of the future, irrespective of moral obligations or the injustices caused to others,—the world to-day acting in accordance with that idea. . . .

FREDERICK A. ROSS,
President, Blavatsky Lodge.

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA.

To Our Fellow Members in Convention Assembled: We cannot find any better words by which to convey our feeling and attitude, and our greeting to you, at this or any other time, than those Mr. Judge once used:

"In storm and shine, in heat and cold, near or afar, among friends or foes, the same in One Work."

Pacific Branch,
W. H. BOX, *President.*

TRIESTE, ITALY.

To The Theosophical Society in Convention Assembled, New York: Dear Fellow Members, Again the Day of T. S. Convention has returned in that Easter-Month, which shall be remembrance for the Passion and Resurrection of Souls. I would like that these Days may become a memorial for the whole year, a mark in our inner life, a brilliant North-Star for our lonely ship amidst the Ocean. We feel the ardent desire to be spiritually united with you all, in these blessed hours, from our long-lasting loneliness.

ALBERTO PLINIO.
TERESA PLINIO.

Delegates and members as usual showed deep interest in the reading of Letters of Greeting, including, in addition to the foregoing, letters from Mr. Birger Elwing (Texas); Miss Anna Fjæstad, President of the Arvika Branch (Sweden); Miss Görich (California); Capt. and Mrs.

Hamlen (Maine); Mr. Herman F. Hohnstedt, President of the Branch in Cincinnati; Mr. R. Jäger, Treasurer of the Aussig Branch, Czechoslovakia; Mrs. H. Maughan, Secretary of the Branch in South Shields (England); Mrs. John L. Mitchell (New Hampshire); Mrs. H. P. Moser (New York); Mr. Wm. E. Mullinax (Arkansas); Mr. A. Valedon (Venezuela); Miss Wallace and Miss Evans, Secretary and President of the Branch in Denver; Mr. Percy W. Ward, Secretary of the Branch in Gateshead, England; cablegram from Mrs. Graves, Mrs. Bagnell, Miss Bagnell; telegram from Mr. Rivero (Washington, D. C.). Several letters from Germany (as well as a letter from German members in Brazil), were also read; these, like all other letters, were received with applause, but are not acknowledged or quoted in the open pages of the QUARTERLY, in case this might cause the writers inconvenience in their own country.

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editors of the Theosophical Quarterly:

May I be permitted, through your columns, to reply to letters in which I am requested to say what I know about various papers referring to Mrs. Tingley, marked Private, issued after Judge's death?

The request in itself is strange. Papers marked Private, sent out and received on the clearest understanding that their contents would be preserved with inviolable secrecy, are what I am urged to discuss. If others choose to do such a thing, on their heads be it. I will not. There are those who excuse themselves for such conduct on the ground that they believed certain things at the time these papers were issued, which they do not believe to-day. On that basis anyone would be free to release himself from any sort of promise whenever he felt like doing so. Such persons are outside the pale of human intercourse.

This much, however, I can say:

(1) The papers in question gave exactly what they purported to give, namely, extracts from Judge's diaries and occult records, referring to Mrs. Tingley, in his handwriting, accurately copied, nothing being omitted which would have discredited or nullified the passages quoted. The originals were seen at the time by several persons who certified they had seen them.

(2) Mrs. Tingley *was* Judge's successor so far as his non-public position was concerned. She was intended to serve as a stop-gap.

(3) Mrs. Tingley failed, and then intrenched herself in her failure. Her new position had fostered her ambition and other very serious weaknesses. Consequently she was deposed by the order of those whom, from the beginning, Judge recognized as his Superiors and as the true Founders of the Theosophical Society.

(4) As Mrs. Tingley refused to accept her deposition and was able to persuade many that it was invalid—not even the formation by her at Chicago of the so-called Universal Brotherhood with herself as Official Leader with autocratic powers, serving to open their eyes—the task of carrying on the Work of Judge and of H.P.B. and their Masters, fell to those who have been identified with The Theosophical Society and with the THEOSOPHICAL QUARTERLY from that time to this.

(5) The Point Loma Society represents those who followed Mrs. Tingley out of the Movement, in spite of her obvious failure and her open violation of Theosophical principles.

(6) The United Lodge represents those who, like Robert Crosbie, followed Mrs. Tingley to Point Loma, out of the Movement, and who, when they did finally wake up to the fact of her failure, lacked the moral courage to seek readmission to the real Society, preferring instead to claim they had been deceived, and that Mrs. Tingley never had been Judge's occult legatee.

(7) The Adyar Society represents those who attacked, slandered, and did their utmost to destroy Judge, as part of the Brahmin campaign to destroy the reputation of H.P.B.

Allow me to add that those who have questioned me on this subject (none of them members of The Theosophical Society) are of two kinds: those who are looking for controversy, and those who are looking for light. As to the first group, they can be of interest only to themselves. As to the second, they are looking for light as it never can be found; they are attempting, by analogy, to determine whether John the Divine was "genuine" by an analysis and comparison of texts, authorities and other material details which are not only unilluminating and lifeless, but childish and deadening; they are trying to decide, again by analogy, whether H.P.B. was really a Lodge Messenger, by counting the number of misquotations in *Isis Unveiled*. If they would know Judge, they must seek him in what he wrote, in what he did; in the pages of the old *Path*, in *Letters that Have Helped Me*, in *The Ocean of Theosophy*, in his letters now appearing in the QUARTERLY; they must seek his spirit and purpose in all these things, and should then look for his "fruits", as in the thirty published volumes of this magazine. If they will do this honestly, they will find him,—in all his simplicity, integrity, unswerving devotion, and great attainment; they may discover even why it was that H.P.B.'s Master called him *friend;* why Mrs. Besant betrayed him; why he died prematurely and was obliged to name Mrs. Tingley his "successor"; finally, why and how it was that Mrs. Tingley so lamentably turned her back on the Lodge to follow her own will and desires.

E. T. HARGROVE.

"I cannot find its works," said the child, as he tore a butterfly into smaller and smaller pieces.—BOOK OF MEMORIES.

Egyptian Tales and Romances, translated by Sir Ernest A. Wallis Budge; Thornton Butterworth, London, 1931; price, 15*s*.

One of the objects of this interesting collection of stories, is to show the continuity, under various disguises, of the religious and secular form of thought in Egypt, throughout many thousands of years. The collection begins with tales said to belong approximately to the Middle Kingdom. Many of them, however, undoubtedly date back at least to the days of Khufu, builder of the great pyramid, probably much earlier. We are then carried through the Coptic period, after which we pass to the Arab conquest and to the time of the Mohammedan domination. The book has therefore been divided into three Parts: I Pagan; II Christian, or Coptic; III Muslim; these divisions being a guide for the reader, though, as a result of the very divergent types and characteristic colouring of the narratives, he would have little difficulty in distinguishing between them. The *ancient* Egyptian tales have, of course, already been translated many times, notably by Maspero and Petrie, but it has not been customary to emphasize (by gathering together into one volume the earlier and the later stories) the fact that, after the most ancient days were past, the centuries which followed not only inherited, but also adopted and kept alive many of the ideas and ideals which had existed in antiquity. It is true that Maspero suggested (no doubt intentionally) that such continuity existed, for, at the end of his *Contes Populaires de l'Egypte Ancienne*, he adds a most interesting fragment: the Theban-Coptic version of the Romance of Alexander the Great, belonging to the Arab period; but in the present book the reader is given a very wide choice of narratives in each period, through the thousands of years over which they are spread, and he can decide for himself whether or not there was any similarity of thought, expression and habit between the early ages and those which succeeded. Sir Ernest Budge justly refers to previous collections of Coptic stories as being, in his judgment, too limited "to show the magnitude of the literary revolution which took place in Egypt when the Egyptians, under the influence of the teaching of St. Mark the Evangelist, embraced Christianity in the first century of our Era". He points to the attempt which was made—and the "curious results" which followed the attempt—to graft the Christian religion upon the older religion of the country. To the student of Theosophy, however, it might appear less of a grafting on of the new, than a deliberate *carrying on* of the old—the

old, changed merely in its outer form so as to suit the newer conditions. Moreover, the student of Theosophy would endeavour not only to trace the connection between the Pantheon of ancient Egypt and the later Christian Hierarchy, but he would also search for parallels in other religions of the world, knowing that, back of each and all of these religions, stood the great Lodge of Masters.

One most interesting matter for comparison, which this book enables the reader easily to study without having to resort to many volumes, is the transformation of the "power of magic" in the Dynastic period, into the "Power of the Word" in Christian Egypt (the "magic" of the ancient Egyptians became the "miracle" of the Copt), and again, in Mohammedan Egypt, the return to "magic", but a magic more fantastic than any which the ancient world has offered us. For, in the early Dynasties at least, magic was still a reality, a force to be reckoned with, a recognized spiritual accomplishment; whereas, in the Muslim tales, while the alert reader may still have glimpses of the magical powers described of old, the description of these powers no longer suggests reality; they no longer seem to be known at first hand; they are fanciful, imaginary, often grotesque. It will be remembered that de Rougé, as far back as 1852, brought to light documentary evidence that a story, familiar to us in the Arabian Nights, had an almost exact counterpart in XIX Dynasty romance, and Brugsch followed, a few years later, with similar discoveries, so that it became a well-established fact in the study of ancient literature (a fact, however, which was long ago known to Theosophy), that the present grows out of the past; that there are no sharp breaks.

This book, with its many well-chosen illustrations, may be recommended to anyone who is interested in literature of this type, and we are indebted to Sir Ernest Budge for the wide and varied selection of stories which he has given us.

T. D.

Twenty Years in Tibet, by David Macdonald; Seeley, Service and Co., London, 1932; price, 18*s*.

The author's father was a Scotchman; his mother, a Sikkimese woman of good family. Speaking Tibetan, Sikkimese, Nepali and Bhutanese fluently, he was appointed British Trade Agent in Tibet in 1905, and held that position until his retirement in 1925. He had close personal contact both with the Dalai and Tashi Lamas, and has much to say that is of interest regarding them and their people. Almost inevitably, however, the author's experience was confined to the surface of Tibet. Apart from the self-evident truth that the more genuinely occult, occultism is, the more difficult it is to discover outwardly, the author's tastes and interests did not run in that direction. If they had, it is unlikely he would have been appointed Trade Agent, or would have held that position for so long. He records two or three curious experiences, none the less, though these have to do with surface "magic" only. For example: When Lord Ronaldshay (now Marquis of Zetland), who at that time was Governor of Bengal, visited Tibet in the summer of 1918, the author accompanied him to the Tungka Monastery, the headquarters of a famous oracle, said to be con-

trolled by the spirit of a departed lama, Shong Ton by name. Says the author: "Among other questions put by Lord Ronaldshay was one as to when the Great War, which was then raging, would end. The reply gave November of that year, 1918, as the month in which hostilities would cease, a surprisingly accurate statement, coming as it did from one who could have had no knowledge whatever of world politics, or even of the progress of the war". T.

China, The Pity of It, by J. O. P. Bland; Doubleday, Doran and Company, Garden City, New York; price, $2.50.

To those who love China, Mr. Bland's book must be intensely interesting, however painful, and even those to whom the Celestial Empire, past or present, makes no appeal, can read it with profit, for while it describes the tragic condition of China, it exposes the policies of the Powers, especially of England and the United States, which have so largely helped to plunge it into this state.

Mr. Bland deals with the conditions in China during the past years, beginning with the Washington Conference in 1921. He speaks of the three influences which governed this Conference: "The influence of the traditional, unswerving national policy which, through successive administrations, has always asserted and jealously safeguarded American interests in the Far East; secondly, the influence of American pacific idealism in politics, chiefly manifested on this occasion by the Women's League for Peace and Freedom, the missionary and educational societies and other similar organisations; and thirdly, the influence of China's skilfully organised and widespread political propaganda."

The ability of these western-trained propagandists of the Cantonese wing of the Kuomintang is truly remarkable. "It is sufficient to say that the Chinese delegates succeeded in 'putting across' a glowing picture of a purely imaginary Chinese Republic, successfully progressing towards orderly constitutional government by virtue of liberal ideas and democratic institutions. In the name of democracy, they made eloquent appeal to the sympathies of the Western world, inviting its moral and material support for an imposing programme of wholly visionary reforms. . . . Not a voice had been raised during the Conference to suggest, on humanitarian grounds, that a genuine effort should be made to stem the tide of anarchy in China; no delegate had disturbed the harmony of the proceedings by drawing attention to the pitiful plight to which the defenceless people had been reduced by ten years of devastating misrule; none had even hinted at the fact that the chief and abiding cause of China's parlous state lies in the nepotism and corruption of her official class. . . . The rise to power of the 'Nationalist' Party—the unruly Cantonese wing of the Kuomintang —in 1927, was undoubtedly as much a result of the Washington Conference as it was of Bolshevik influence and subsidies."

He then proceeds to describe the Cantonese Government and the doctrines and apotheosis of Sun Yat Sen. His chapter on "The Missionary Factor" is extremely illuminating, and should be read by all "up-lifters" who fancy that

a little hygiene, and undigested culture from the Mississippi "Bible Belt", can convert a race to sainthood. "Broadly speaking, most of the calamities, which together make the tragedy of China in the twentieth century, may be ascribed to the impact of the West, to the undermining of the old social order by the military, economic and political forces brought to bear upon it from over-seas since the beginning of the nineteenth century. The long-drawn tragedies of civil strife and administrative chaos are no new experience for China, whose history has been fittingly described as a series of paroxysms, where the passing of a dynasty has repeatedly been followed by periods of anarchy and where the annihilation of millions by flood, famine or disease has always been accepted as part of the inevitable destiny of mankind. But the cataclysm of China in the twentieth century differs from those of former days, in that the nation is now threatened with the permanent destruction of those things which heretofore constituted its unfailing preservatives of cohesion and recuperative energy. So long as the ethical foundations of the old social order remained intact, calamitous periods such as those which occurred at the close of the Ming dynasty or during the Taiping rebellion, left no visible mark on the national life. . . .

"Without endorsing in its entirety the opinion of the British ex-Ambassador . . . which ascribes all China's present troubles to the influence of American Mission Schools and to the Chinese students educated in America, it is safe to say that, in so far as they have striven to undermine the old morality, based on the Confucian system of ethics and the family, they have been, and are, powerful instruments of social disintegration and therefore responsible for much of the indiscipline prevailing in the younger generation and the general disorder thereby produced. Broadly speaking, every Chinese youth educated in American Mission Schools has been a carrier of the germs of disruption. He has usually been taught to despise the wisdom of his forefathers, reject the cult of ancestors and with it the traditions and standards which, as a French observer (Émile Hovelaque) rightly says, 'have given to China's civilization and to the life of her people a stability and harmony never excelled in the history of mankind.' In place of the traditional principles of the Confucianist family and the clan system, his mind has been imbued with the doctrines of denationalized individualism, with results that have been plainly demonstrated by the self-assertive indiscipline and frank materialism of the student class, and by the violent hostility to foreigners displayed by the younger generation of politicians educated in American Schools."

The Missions, forced to endorse the goings-on of their pupils, are now in the extraordinary position of sympathizing with and applauding a government allied with the anti-Christian Soviets. The influence of Soviet propaganda in America is well described. "The Bolshevik's method of procedure, like the wasp's, is to make a way to the heart of his objective by attacking it at the weakest spot. Thus, in England, his activities have been chiefly directed towards fomenting disorder and creating discontent by boring within through the trade unions and the revolutionary elements in the body politic. But recognizing the fact that the Federation of Labour in the United States represents

an industrial population definitely opposed to the doctrines of Marxian Communism, the directing minds of the Third International have concentrated their energies on the creation of a body of public opinion favourable to their purposes amongst the religious, educational and 'uplifting' societies throughout the country. Their insidious approach has been steadily made upon the common ground of pacifism. . . ."

Mr. Bland goes on to picture the Foreign Office brand of thought in Britain, which is well depicted as an "atmosphere sickli'ed o'er with the pale cast of high-brow internationalism", and he quotes a sermon by Prebendary Gough, with which we can agree violently. "Any attempt to energize the nation by appeals to a masculine and Imperial spirit—however gracious and humane the purposes to which it is invited to devote its energies—is becoming increasingly regarded as 'unchristian'. We are to have a special kind of politics, economics and citizenship for restraining efficiency and flattering the incapable. . . . The Feminine Man is so full of pity for any spectacle which suggests hard work, and so unfriendly in his attitude towards robust strength or efficiency, especially efficiency which expects to receive any reward for being efficient. Very strangely, he can often applaud vigorous exercises in other races which are not friendly to us, but he holds that it is irreligious to commend these things in the people of England. . . . This sort of person has a settled conviction that his country is wrong, and any foes who rise against her, right. He is for the most part in favour of making friendly agreements with irreconcilable enemies, even with an enemy who throughout the world is striving for the overthrow of our Empire. And he is quite pleased to bribe the old English energy down into home-abiding lethargy by doles and such-like expedients."

Another apt quotation is from Meredith Townsend, who wrote even twenty years ago: "Whether for good or evil, a great change is passing over Englishmen. They have become uncertain of themselves, afraid of their old opinions, doubtful of the true teaching of their own consciences. They doubt if they have any longer any more right to rule any one, themselves almost included. An old mental disease, the love of approbation, has suddenly risen among them to the height of a passion. Instead of being content to rule well, to do justice and to love mercy, they are trying themselves by a new standard, and desire to rule so that the governed may applaud, or, as they phrase it with a certain unconscious unctuousness, may 'love' them. That is the real root of the great change that has passed over the management of children, of the whole difficulty in Ireland, of the reluctance to conquer, and of the whole of our new philanthropic and social legislation."

Finally, we must quote one more excellent passage from Mr. Castle, American Under-Secretary of State: "No nation has ever forwarded the cause of peace by weakness when a moral principle is involved."

It may be seen from these passages that Mr. Bland's book is not merely a statement of interesting facts, but is provocative of much thought upon the moral principles involved in the state of the world to-day. The student of Theosophy will find it well worth his attention. ST. C. LAD.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

QUESTION NO. 379.—*In Book XVIII of the* Bhagavad Gîta, *Krishna says: "Better is one's own duty without excellence than the duty of another well carried out; doing the work imposed by one's own nature, he incurs no sin." I have never understood this, for we are told that one's own nature is evil; how, then, can action imposed by it be without sin?*

ANSWER.—Man's nature is dual: there is the higher, or real, or good nature; and the lower, or unreal, or evil nature. As I understand it, the statement quoted does not suggest that man follow the inclinations of his lower nature, but that by meditation, self-examination and right self-identification he throw the weight of the will and imagination to the side of his real nature, which is at one with universal nature, and do scrupulously whatever may be imposed by it. By doing the work imposed by his real nature, he works in harmony with all nature; he particularizes the universal, and so is said to incur no sin. He must be sure that it is his *own nature*, and not inclination, which imposes the task. A good rule for guidance would be to follow Mr. Judge's advice: "Never do anything which the lower nature desires for itself alone"; which is another way of saying that one should do "the work imposed by one's own nature". G. M. W. K.

ANSWER.—We have been told that the duty of another is full of danger, and we have only to contemplate people whom we know, dashing about in the world to-day, "doing good" at the slightest provocation, ready and willing and eager to tell everyone else just exactly what ought to be done at any given moment and at any and all junctures, to realize how true this is. It is appalling to consider the amount of other people's Karma which they assume, the harm they do, the difficulties they create, and the sin which they incur themselves and which they force others to incur. C. R. A.

ANSWER.—We should consider the teaching of the *Gîta* as a whole if we would understand any selected passage properly. What is said of caste in Chapter II, wherein Shri Krishna showed Arjuna that it was his duty as a Kshatriya to fight, and that egotism causes violation of duty and grief,—should be read in connection with the verse quoted in the question. Referring to that verse, an Indian commentary says: "He who does the duty ordained according to his nature [and his caste is said to be an outer expression of his *personal* nature] incurs no sin, even as a worm born in poison does not die from that poison." R. P.

ANSWER.—No student of Theosophy would say that "one's own nature is evil". There are two natures in man, the higher and the lower; the soul, the spark of the Divine, and the false personality. It is this latter that in the average man is "evil", for it has not yet been brought under the control of the soul. The first work imposed by the soul's nature is the dominance of its personality. It cannot carry out the purpose for which it exists until it is master in its own household. Karma provides the special circumstances and duties best suited to enable each soul to bring its particular personality into obedience. One's own duties are one's own road. Obviously, to do the duty of another does not help him to conquer his personality.

The degree of development of the soul, its "nature", determines what duties it needs, and hence what Karma gives it. They are in that sense imposed by its nature. J. F. B. M.

ANSWER.—It should be remembered that the work, or activities, of the mind, are at least as important as outer action, and that mental meddling, mental curiosity, mental speculation and interference with the duties and affairs of other people, even when confined strictly to the mental plane, are sinful, with the additional odium of being vulgar. That *part* of the mind, the nature or tendency of which it is to indulge in such activities, should be checked remorselessly, and set to work along the lines of "one's own duty". There is always something one *ought* to be thinking about, to put in the place of needless, fruitless, impertinent, morbid or other sinful thoughts. H.

QUESTION NO. 380.—*A recent "Hibbert Journal" had an article, "Does God Evolve?" How would a Theosophist answer this?*

ANSWER.—Turning to *The Key to Theosophy*, by H. P. Blavatsky, we find: "Our Deity is neither in a paradise, nor in a particular tree, building, or mountain: it is everywhere, in every atom of the visible as of the invisible Cosmos; in, over, and around every invisible atom and divisible molecule; for IT is the mysterious power of evolution and involution, the omnipresent, omnipotent, and even omniscient creative potentiality." It is at the same time, "Absolute Thought itself, Absolute Existence." "Thou art one, and Thy unity is never diminished, never extended, and cannot be changed." "Our Deity is the eternal, incessantly evolving, not creating, builder of the universe itself, unfolding out of its own essence, not being made. . . .

"It is the one law, giving the impulse to manifested, eternal, and immutable laws, within that never-manifesting, because Absolute Law, which in its manifesting periods is the Ever-Becoming."

We should distinguish, however, between the Absolute, the Unmanifested Logos, and the Manifested Logoi. R. P.

ANSWER.—Would not the answer depend almost entirely upon what we mean by "God"? Do we mean some Great Being whom we can define, even if but dimly; or do we mean the Formless, the Undefinable?

"Does God evolve?" It is a question which, of course, lies far above even the shadow of real comprehension for most of us, and the answer is certainly far removed from the plane of words, of human reasoning; but we have been told that Masters themselves are evolving (though the word is, perhaps, not wholly appropriate), so it follows that even the Lodge must be in process of evolving, since a deepened consciousness gained by one Master, becomes the common property of all. Further, *The Secret Doctrine* tells us that at the dawn of each new Manvantara, Spirit descends into matter; that, at length turning, Spirit reascends, diversity seeking unity once more. We are told that, after passing through myriads of worlds, the monadic Life-tide at length rejoins its Source, carrying with it a Self-consciousness wrung from the milliards of opportunities for choice which this unthinkably long passage toward an unimaginable goal has given—a Self-consciousness, the fruit of experience. Is it not therefore conceivable that even the Logos might be the richer (and in that sense evolve), with the in-sweeping, the Home-coming of each new Life-tide? T. A.

ANSWER.—This is a subject that appears to fascinate most beginners. H.P.B. and her Teachers, recognizing the need to satisfy our groping minds, until such time as our wills could be turned in the right direction, did their utmost to put into our two-dimensional language the truths which, in the nature of things, can at best only be symbolized by such limited and inadequate tokens. Knowledge *is* obtainable; but it would be tragic indeed if our minds could contain or express it. Can a cow distinguish between a man of culture and an ordinary Bachelor of Arts? Can the ordinary Bachelor of Arts see any difference between himself and the man of culture? We must *become* the Spirit if we would know the Spirit; and Theosophy declares that we *can* become the Spirit, and then shows us how. H.